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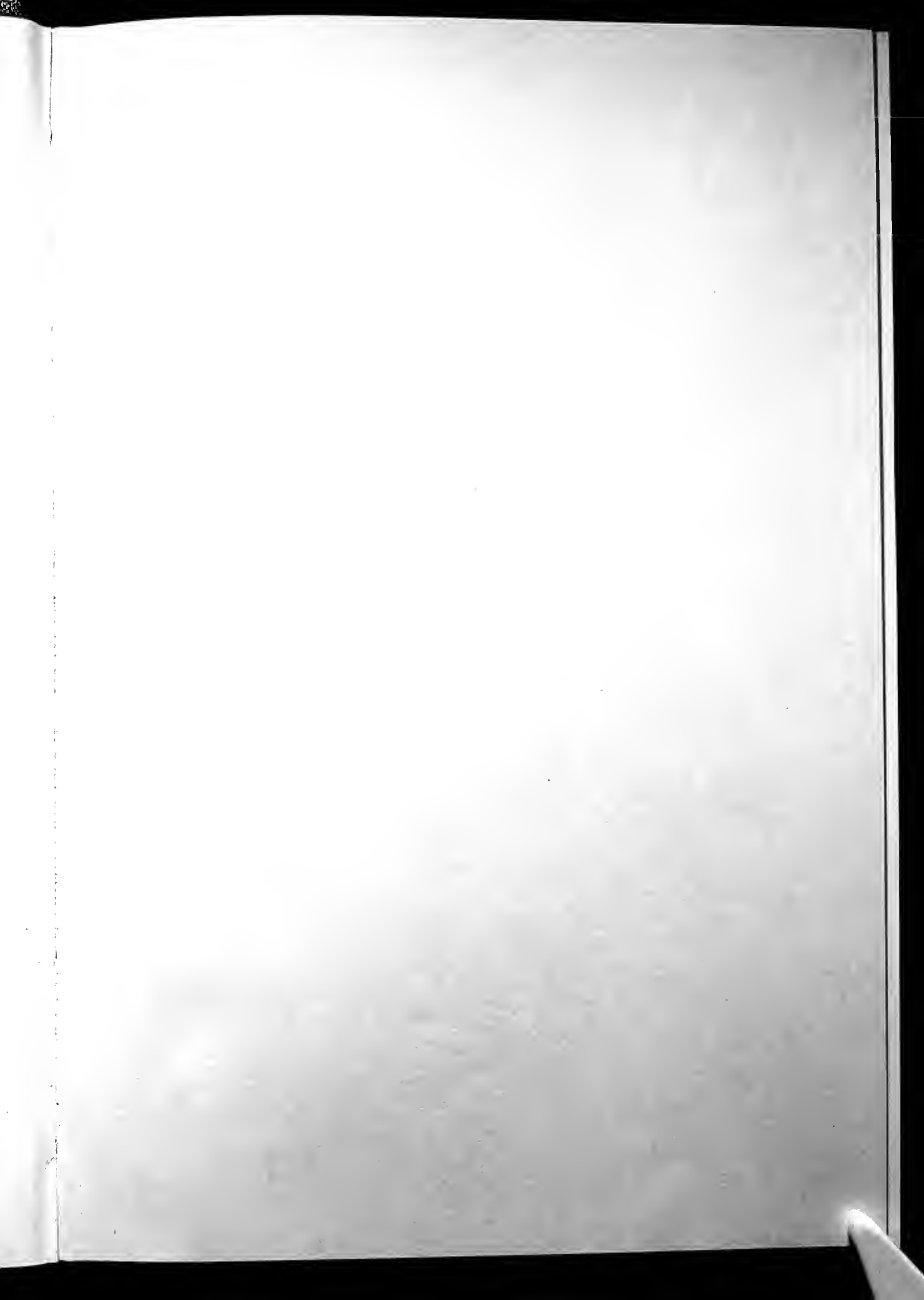














# African Violet

## MAGAZINE

January • February 2013

Volume 66

Number 1



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### On this cover: Mac's Strawberry Sundae

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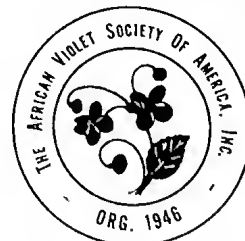
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Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

# President's Message

By Linda Hall, President

517 E. Elm St. • Ravenwood, MO 64479

Email: LadyLinda121@hotmail.com

The holidays are behind us and I hope yours were filled with family and friends. Personally, Christmas is my favorite holiday. I decorate every room in my house and love to invite friends over to enjoy food and friendship – family too. Though I have to admit, there isn't as much food as there used to be since it seems to me that the pounds stick to me more the older I get. Oh well, I have to remind myself that with aging comes wisdom, right? And don't forget those senior citizen discounts...at restaurants - (benefits of aging?).

I have a challenge for all affiliates. An anonymous donor has stepped forward and will match all donations made by affiliates to the general fund up to \$1,500.00. I hope our affiliates will take this challenge and grow our treasury. This is a wonderful opportunity for AVSA, made possible by a very generous donor. Will your affiliate take the challenge?

The "Eyes of Texas are upon us." Are you ready for Austin? Have you put aside those special plants you want to exhibit? Are you babying them and treating them like royalty? Austin should have a large show considering all the Texas growers. I am one Missourian that will also be exhibiting.



This will be my 25th convention, and I have exhibited at all of them. Even when I fly, I manage to put one or two in a box and exhibit. I can usually pack at least one or two designs in a suitcase or a box too. (I have stories about that.) Did you know that a copier paper box will fit exactly under the seat of a plane?

Here is my challenge for you. If you attend the Austin convention this year, bring an exhibit – plant or design. If every attendee brought one exhibit, what a fabulous show that would be! If you bring an exhibit, stop me at convention and tell me you did. I really want to know.

I am making something special to be auctioned at the Luncheon Auction at convention. I hope it creates a little buzz and funds for AVSA. Also, my mother is donating her very coveted American flag watch for the auction. It was sold at the Washington, DC, convention right after 9/11. There were only fifty of them made, and to this day, it is my favorite AVSA watch. I have every watch that AVSA has sold since 1986. Be sure to join us at the Luncheon Auction!

Until next time.

*Linda*



# Editor's Notes

By *Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor*

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: [rrumsey@earthlink.net](mailto:rrumsey@earthlink.net)

It's hard to believe that it's 2013! This is an important milestone for me, as it is my twentieth year as an employee of the African Violet Society of America. I had two kids in college at the time and really needed some extra money, having closed a small business a couple of years earlier.

A year later, when then-President **Hortense Pittman** offered me the job of Editor of the AVM, I was thrilled. With a background in writing, and a life-long love of growing plants, I was hooked, and have no intension of leaving any time soon.

Through these many years, Hortense and her wonderful husband, **Ray (aka "Sundown")** have remained close friends of mine. I had a call from Hortense a while back, telling me that Ray had become interested in hybridizing *Streptocarpus*, and was in the process of writing an article for the AVM about this new adventure. Being 94 years young, Ray entitled the article "Never Too Old." (Page 10).

The plants pictured in the article are unusual and absolutely gorgeous. I was so honored when Hortense also told me that Ray had named one of the new plants after me. 'Raydar's Ruthie' is lavender and yellow!

There are several great articles in this issue, and some of them address INSV (Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus). Recently, my dear friend, **Pat Hancock**, hybridizer of the outstanding Buckeye series of African violets, discovered that the INSV virus had invaded her collection. Read Pat's article, with excellent color photographs, on page 58.



Long-time, well-known AVSA member, **Ronn Nadeau**, sent me two articles on African violets and virus. The first, "Another Virus on African Violets?," that you will want to read. (page 20).

Ronn also has done extensive research, and with his second article shares "How Best to Protect African Violets from INSV and Other Viruses," on page 21 in this issue.

Ronn's article "proposes a program for eliminating, not just controlling thrips and mites in AV grow areas, be they in homes or commercial greenhouses." With extensive research, he addresses currently available products, spray schedules, and provides two excellent charts; Table 1 focusing on Toxicity and Pesticide Resistance Information, and Table 2 covering Pesticide Label Information and Product Costs.

My friend, **Neil Lipson**, was one of those suffering damage from Hurricane Sandy. His roof was torn off and after clean-up, he was left with empty spaces. Neil decided to make one of them an African violet room. His article "Designing an African Violet Room," is a "must-read" for those of you thinking about doing just that. (page 27).

I wish you all a 2013 filled with love, laughter, and African violets!

*Ruth*

Show Schedule Approver, **Meredith Hall's** email address has changed.

Please make note of her new address:

*m.hall@reagan.com*



# Exploring the Austin Area: Fun Day Trips for the Adventuresome!

Planning a little extra time to adventure out and explore other venues around Austin? Previous articles introduced many fun and exciting things to do in the city. You can also explore a rich bounty of other day trip opportunities on your own leisure time before, during, or after convention. Bring your walking shoes and cameras!

**Staying Close to the Hotel?** Discover the historic **Texas State Cemetery** that serves as a tribute to people who have made Texas famous and is the final resting place of Governors, Senators, Legislators, Congressmen, Judges, and other legendary Texans. Take a dip in **Deep Eddy Pool** – once a 1920s resort - now a historic landmark and the oldest cold spring-fed man-made swimming hole in Texas. Visit the **Austin Zoo and Animal Sanctuary** and enjoy an outdoor animal adventure. Explore the **Austin Nature & Science Center** (ANSC), an outdoor adventure that provides hands-on educational exhibits and recreational activities to increase awareness and appreciation of the natural environment.

**Traveling West?** Visit **Wimberley** known as "A Little Bit of Heaven" - an artist's haven where local artisans peddle their craft around Wimberley Town Square and home to the unique glass-blower artisans of Wimberley Glassworks. Take a dip in Blue Hole, hike Mt. Baldy (aka Prayer Mountain) or drive down the Devil's Backbone on Highway 32. Visit **Dripping Springs** - "Gateway to the Hill Country." Explore natural grottos, a magnificent swimming hole and a cave when you visit Hamilton Pool and West Cave Preserve. Stop by **Driftwood** to take down a big, honkin' plate of BBQ at The Salt Lick.

**Traveling South?** Discover **San Marcos** as you explore the spring-fed San Marcos River and glide across the beautiful crystal waters of Spring Lake while enjoying the glass bottom boat tour at Aquarena Center. Stroll through the Downtown Historic District filled with unique boutiques, Texas-

sized gift shops, and restaurants. Shop for the latest fashion at the San Marcos Premium Outlets and Tanger Outlet Center - home to 230 name brand stores.

**Traveling North?** Visit **Georgetown** and stroll through the historic downtown square where you can appreciate beautiful Victorian architecture. Stop by Georgetown Winery to taste award-winning local wines. Enjoy dining at one of many dining & culinary establishments offering BBQ, catfish, Mexican food, home cooking, and homemade desserts. Explore Inner Space Caverns, an underground adventure through a living cavern offering breathtakingly beautiful formations and spectacular displays of nature.

**Traveling East?** Visit historic **Bastrop** - home of the famous Loblolly "Lost Pines." **Bastrop** recently made history with the destructive 2011 Bastrop Complex Fires; however, the spirit of this community endures. Wander through the historic downtown area filled with gift and antique shops, eating establishments, and even an old-fashioned barbershop. Stop by Lock Drugs for a hand-dipped Blue Bell milkshake from their old-fashioned soda fountain. Visit **Lockhart** - home of 4 locally owned BBQ joints and known as the "Barbeque Capitol of Texas." Take the **Lockhart** BBQ Challenge and eat at all 4 BBQ joints in one day. Good luck - and bring your antacid! Discover **Elgin** - legendary Sausage Capital of Texas - and proud home of Meyer's Elgin Sausage (aka "Cue-Topia") and Southside Market. Get into the whole sausage experience as you eat off butcher paper in dining rooms with sawdust-covered floors. For movie buffs, **Elgin** has been the setting for numerous motion pictures including the famous coin toss scene from the movie "Friday Night Lights," filmed in the main dining room of Southside Market.

As you can see, you don't need to travel far for a day trip to explore the many wonderful sights of this great state when you join us as "*Violets Dance Across Texas*."





Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

*S. ionantha subsp. ionantha var.  
diplotricha 'Parker'*

*Best Species African violet*

*Exhibited by: Bill Price*



## ***Making Waves***

*Exhibited and  
Hybridized by:  
P. Sorano/Lyon  
Greenhouses  
Large*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## ***Rob's Rinky Dink***

*Exhibited by:  
Diane Miller  
Hybridized by:  
R. Robinson  
Miniature*



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

# In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

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For most growers of African violets there will come a time or an event where something changes in your growing conditions and your plants may respond in a negative manner. For example, sometimes there are changes in your water supply, either a switch in your city's water treatment or you change to reverse osmosis water (RO water) to avoid heavy mineral salts. You may suffer from (heaven forbid) a mite or thrip infestation or other disease problem. You might be forced to change fertilizers because the manufacturer no longer makes your favorite brand. When the growing conditions change, so do the way your plants grow. These changes can make a hybridizer wonder about the effect on their crosses. Will the environmental changes alter the genetics? Will the environmental changes alter their success in getting seed to set? This column's questions address a few of these issues.

***Q: I've been fighting a pest problem by regular spraying with Neem oil. Will this affect my ability to continue hybridizing?***

A: A number of growers regularly treat their plants with Neem oil as a preventative measure and seem to have no growth changes in their plants. I've used Neem oil myself and have not seen an effect on the growth of the plants, especially on the flowers. However, Neem oil can sometimes cause some damage to the petals of flowers, especially if sprayed too heavily or if hot water is used to make the spray. There is a potential that the damage might interfere with the flower's reproductive capabilities. However, if the flower was too severely damaged, I would think it would just abort and not be available for using in a cross at all.

If you are concerned about Neem oil on your flowers and hybridizing, I would try to avoid



heavy sprays on the flowers. As long as the flowers appear "normal", you shouldn't have any troubles making your crosses. In fact, the higher humidity of the sprays might actually help with seed set. I've often noticed that increasing the humidity will allow the pollen tubes to grow better resulting in heavier seed set.

***Q: I recently switched to Reverse Osmosis (RO) water and suffered for a time with pH changes in my soil and micro-nutrient deficiencies. My plants stopped blooming for a while, but now things seem to be better. Can I continue with my hybridizing program?***

A: As long as the plants are blooming and you have flowers to work with, I see no reason why you shouldn't be able to hybridize. The biggest drain in energy for African violets is in actually producing the flowers to begin with. The fruits or seed capsules and the developing seeds after flowering appear to have low energy drains on the plants. If you are concerned with the plants growing poorly and possibly aborting the recently set fruits, try removing the next set of developing flowers. This should prevent the energy drain on the plant and keep plenty of energy in the plant for the developing seeds and fruits.

***Q: I know that some growers use fertilizers that are high in the middle number, or phosphorous to promote high flower numbers in show plants. Is it necessary to do the same thing to get large number of flowers for hybridizing?***

A: The use of high phosphorus fertilizer (high middle number) is a "trick" to help a large healthy plant produce a good floral display for show. However, the continued use of high phosphorus fertilizer is usually not recommended as this

unbalances the plant's use of energy and will cause poor growth in the long run. I don't see a need to stimulate a plant this way to get flowers for use in hybridizing. If the African violet is healthy, it should produce flowers using more traditional fertilizers. These flowers should provide plenty of material for making your crosses.

One other side effect of the high phosphorus fertilizers is the tendency of semi-double flowers to go to complete double flowers. These flowers are now male sterile (no anthers or pollen) so they can't be used as a pollen parent. The double petals may also interfere with the development of the pistil, or make it difficult to locate the pistil for pollination. These are additional good reasons for keeping with your regular fertilizing program during hybridizing.

***Q: Is there any truth to the idea that adding dolomite lime to the soil will help plants produce better seeds?***

A: Dolomite lime is sometimes added to potting soil to help counteract the acidity of decaying peat moss. Dolomite lime also contains some minerals that might be deficient in the growing mix. Seed set and fruit maturation on African violets can take 4-6 months or longer. If your soil mixture changes

acidity rapidly due to decomposing peat moss, necessitating frequent repotting events, it might be that the soil could become too "sour" for a plant maturing seed pods. I wouldn't recommend repotting a plant with maturing seed pods because the stress may cause the pods to abort. If repotting can be avoided through the addition of dolomite lime, it might indeed help the plants mature their fruits and seeds. I'm not sure if the seeds would be "better" especially in a genetic sense, but they might be more mature and viable increasing your overall germination rate.

***Q: How many seeds should I expect in a mature seed pod?***

A: The number of seeds will depend on a number of factors. Miniature plants have smaller flowers and smaller fruits. This will limit their number of seeds to 20-60. Standard plants with bigger flowers can produce seed pods with 200-300 seeds. I recently saw a report from an individual who had potted up 225 seedlings from a cross (at last count) and wondered if this was "normal". Given good pollination conditions, quality pollen and a vigorous standard plant, the number of seeds produced per seed pod can be very high.

## Where Are the Flowers?

By Joyce Stork • From AVSA's Website "Frequently Asked Questions"

African violets need several things to bloom well.

- 1) It must receive adequate light. African violets prefer to be within 12 inches of a bright window or 12 inches away from a fluorescent light unit that is turned on for 12 hours a day. If it isn't getting enough light, the leaves will usually reach upward.
- 2) It must be fertilized regularly with a balanced mix for African violets. There are many good brands.
- 3) African violets bloom best when in small pots, ideally only one-third the diameter of their leaves. A plant that measures nine inches across should be in a three inch pot.
- 4) African violets bloom best when the roots are well-developed. The best roots form in very porous potting mix that is kept evenly moist at all times- never saturated and never bone dry. We recommend a mix that is equal parts of sphagnum peat moss, vermiculite and perlite.
- 5) If the air is very dry, the flower buds may be drying off before they are even visible. Humidity levels of 40% are ideal. Check also to see if a vent might be blowing dry air across the surface of the plant.
- 6) Some African violets become vegetative, meaning they are so comfortable that they only grow leaves. To convert them to being reproductive, you must give them a little scare. Repotting is one method. It also works to tap the pot firmly on a hard surface to create a minor earthquake. This seems to cause the plant to awaken the survival-of-the-species instinct and it will often set buds.
- 7) Some varieties are shy bloomers. If you have tried all of these techniques and it still does not bloom, discard it and try again with a different variety that may be more suited to your conditions.

Happy Growing! Joyce Stork



# Never Too Old

By Ray "Sundown" Pittman

I was 94 on December 13th. My wife, Hortense, and I have been involved with African violets for about forty-five years. We became AVSA Commercial Members in Austin, TX, in 1968.

We met Darryl Hoover, who was also growing African violets, a young Air Force cadet at Randolph Air Force Base, and we became friends. Darryl was the only airman on base with a Flora cart in his room! After going our separate ways for a while, we renewed our friendship. In the past three



*Ray & Hortense Pittman*

years, Darryl has flown in from his home in Colorado to take us to the Lone Star State Convention.

During the last convention, I asked him to get some Strops for me. His reply was that he would send me some of his from Colorado on his return.



*'Raydar's Tensie'*



*'Raydar's Ruthie'*

He sent me a nice collection of eight plants, and on a return visit, five more. Among these plants was 'Wow,' a lovely *Streptocarpus* from Poland! I was in awe! It was then that I decided to make a few crosses, and see what would happen.

My first cross, "A," only produced twelve plants, and they all grew very slowly.

The blossom on the "A2," was dark purple with a yellow throat.

"A7" had a purple blossom with lower petals of yellow.

"A8" produced a lavender blossom with lower petals of white-edged lavender.

I feel lucky, and can't wait for the others to bloom!

I am working with two more crosses that have produced about 100 babies that are up, potted, and just waiting to bloom.



*'Raydar's Ruthie'*

My best cross is *S. 'Wow'* onto a hot-pink plant with variegated foliage.

With this group of Streps, I will use a prefix of **Raydar's**. My middle name is Ray, and the "dar" is from the first three letters of Darryl's name.

The purple and white is named *'Raydar's Tensie,'* after my lovely wife, Hortense.

The lavender and yellow is *'Raydar's Ruthie.'*

I have to live a long time to see what these seeds produce. I am a firm believer that "The more you give, the more you get." Through friendship, all of this has happened. Try to make someone happy today!

Since we do not ship plants, I will try to find someone who does, if I am lucky with the other crosses.

Lord willing, we will see you in Austin at the 2013 AVSA convention!



*'Raydar's Tensie'*

# Question Box

By Ralph Robinson

P.O. Box 9 • Naples, NY 14512  
Email: [robsviolet@aol.com](mailto:robsviolet@aol.com)

As is always the case, we are far too busy to reply to mail (or e-mail), though we do read all of it. Should you want a personal reply, we are more than willing to answer phone calls made during our normal business hours (12-5 pm EST), since we can work and talk at the same time. For those with access to the internet, we can be reached at [robsviolet@aol.com](mailto:robsviolet@aol.com) via our web-site at [www.violetbarn.com](http://www.violetbarn.com) or via our Facebook page. The web-site also contains a wealth of information (and answers to many of your questions).



**Question:** *I have a trailing African violet that has gotten quite big. I am not sure what to do with it. The trailers are getting very long and have nowhere to root (hanging over pot). Since I have had it, I have repotted twice. Should I keep repotting or cut the trailers off? Can the trailing part be rooted if I cut them off?*

Answer: Perhaps the nicest thing about trailing African violets is that you can pretty much grow them to any size or form that you want. You can grow them as small "shrubs", in large, shallow, pots as "ground cover", or cascading from hanging baskets. We've done all three, but personally, think they look nicest when grown as a ground cover. Whichever form you choose, the ultimate size of the plant is up to you. If you think any branch is too long, just cut it to the desired length. Not only might this improve the size and shape of your plant, this will also encourage growth of more branches and foliage, giving you a fuller plant. An alternative would be to take that (too long) branch, bend it back over the pot, and pin it down to the soil surface where it will root. This is a good way of filling in bare spots, if any.

Because trailers, by nature, grow multi-crowned, this makes them even more tolerant of neglect and more forgiving of a grower's mistakes. Occasional pruning and thinning-out of foliage

only encourages new growth and a fuller plant in the long run. All the more reason to remove old, damaged, or otherwise unsightly leaves. Whatever bare spots you may create by doing this will soon be filled by new growth. We've taken very old, unattractive plants and removed virtually all of the leaves, leaving nothing but nearly-bare branches (admittedly, not everyone has the heart to do this). On older plants, the branches can be quite long, so we'll arrange them over the soil surface and pin them down. In a few months, the plant will be covered in all-new growth and will look lovely. Something you couldn't do with other violets. To grow as a cascading plant, you want to let the branches grow a bit longer and not continually pin them back in the pot. Do this only as much as needed to fill in bare spots. If you're growing in a window, be sure to regularly turn the plant so all sides get good light. This includes the top of the plant, where growth can easily get sparse on an older plant if the light isn't sufficient.

As for rooting the tips, this is very easy to do and a very fast way of getting new plants. Just press a tip having four leaves, or so, into a small pot containing moist (not soggy) soil and place in a clear, plastic, baggie or covered container. It will root in about a month. For the impatient, this can also be an easy way to quickly get a full plant - you can root multiple tips in a shallow pot. Though this can be a fun way of growing a trailer as a "houseplant," don't do this for show plants, since AVSA rules require a minimum of three crowns, growing from *one* plant.

**Question:** *Can I use T5 florescent bulbs (2000 lumens/24 watts) as good quality lighting for my miniature violets? If so, should I use one or two bulbs, and what is the correct height of the bulbs from the plants?*

**Related question:** *I have been growing violets for ages and have never really had any trouble. Some were under shop lights and some in windows, but all were easy. The problem started after I purchased a 4-bulb grow light with T5 bulbs. I just about cooked the violets. I then purchased a shop light that had T8 bulbs. The violets are still suffering. I have a mix of standard and minis under the lights and all are not doing the same thing. Some almost seem normal, but the problem ones have very bunched/knotted leaves at the crown. The set up is two shop lights with two T8 bulbs each over an 18" by 48" inch area. They are on about 12 hours and are 12 to 14" from the shelf. Have you had any experience with the newer florescent bulbs? What is your recommendation?*

Answer: This is not an uncommon problem, as more people switch to newer fixtures and bulbs in an effort to save on their utility bills. Modern fluorescent lighting is far more efficient, giving you much more light for the same electricity used. Fixtures using electronic ballasts use significantly less electricity, and produce far less heat, than older fixtures with magnetic ballasts. Bulbs are also more efficient. The typical T8 bulb is brighter and more efficient, than the fatter T12 bulbs that most of us are most familiar with, and T5 bulbs are even more so. This can save you a lot of money on utility bills if you have a number of light fixtures over your plants. We're a good illustration. We went to electronic ballasts more than 20 years ago and saved perhaps 25-30% on our electric bill. Over the past 10 years, or so, we've gradually replaced most of our fixtures using T12 bulbs with those using T8 bulbs. Despite expanding our growing area over this time (and rising rates), our electricity bill is actually a bit lower than it was 10 years ago.

Of course, there's no such thing as a "free lunch." Plants that did well growing under older T12 bulbs may not like growing under the brighter T8 and T5 bulbs. The plants described in the above question are showing some of the symptoms of too much light. Some varieties will suffer

(or benefit) more than others from the brighter light – those that still appear normal are likely just those varieties that are more tolerant. All else equal, though, plants that had done well under T12 bulbs likely won't be happy grown under two T8 bulbs over the same growing area, at the same distance from the plants, lit for the same hours per day. The difference in brightness is just too noticeable.

Finding the solution requires some homework and experimenting. Let your plants tell you what's best. In the case of the first grower, our guess would be that one of these T5 bulbs, about 10-12" above her miniature violets would be fine, given the lumen output stated (in lumens is about twice as bright as many T12 bulbs). Using that as a starting point, make adjustments based upon the plant's growth. If leaves look green and healthy but flowering is sparse, increase the light—more lights closer to the plants, for more hours, or use additional bulbs. If the plant blooms well, but its leaves are pale or yellowed in color, and growth is tight and/or "hugging" the pot, then provide less light. If the distance of the bulbs above the plants is fixed, try experimenting with number and quality of bulbs used. Not all bulbs are rated the same. Check the lumens output—higher numbers mean brighter light. In our case, we can't alter the distance above the plants, but we've done most everything else. Above some plants, even though the fixture will accommodate two tubes, we'll use only one. We'll also mix and match bulbs depending upon lumens output. We've even resorted to painting some bulbs (to make them less bright) to get things just right. In every case, the plants tell us what's right, and we make adjustments.

**Question:** *I acquired a plant of 'Irish Flirt' this spring. It has since stopped growing. The leaves are just mounding up in the center of the plant. What's wrong?*

Answer: 'Irish Flirt' is an excellent semiminia-ture variety, one of the very best, especially if you like green blooms. It's an excellent bloomer and easy grower, but it does have fairly thick, wavy, leaves, which can be a problem if not dealt with properly. Varieties with this kind of foliage won't

grow well unless foliage growth is controlled. Our general rule is the following: if you have more than 12-15 leaves (this grower had many more) on your violet (trailers and some plants grown for show excepted) then it's got too many leaves. To begin, blooms are only produced on new growth, so older, outer rows of leaves won't be producing flowers anyway. Also, removing older leaves encourages, and makes room for, newer growth. This is especially true for varieties such as 'Irish Flirt' with thick, wavy leaves, or more so, for those varieties with heavily scalloped "girl" foliage. If excess lower leaves aren't removed, there simply is no room for new leaves to grow out and properly lay flat - they end up mounding as described in the question.

*Question: The label on the side of the pot I purchased from you has a date on it. What does this mean?*

Answer: This was a phone call received while writing this column. Thought it might be instructive. In our case this is the date that plant was first potted - a "birth" date so to speak. We use this information for a few reasons. Though we have reasons, as a producer and seller, to do this, many would be just as useful for the hobby grower. Primarily, it's a reminder of when to repot, either into a larger pot, or into fresh soil. We usually like to do this, and tell our customers to, about six months after the date on the label. Just as importantly for us, it serves as a means of quality control, a way of tracking down problems, should they arise later. For example, suppose we discover a mature plant with problems - say, we find it has

mealy bugs, or it looks sickly in some way. We'll look for other plants potted on or about the same time. If the origin of the problem was the leaf cuttings producing plants potted on that date, we might explain the mealy bug. We'd then locate these plants, using the potting date, and treat (or more likely, discard) all these plants. Perhaps the soil used in potting on this date was bad or improperly mixed. This might be the case if we find large numbers of plants potted on this date all growing poorly. Solving problems is so much easier when you have a trail of evidence.

*Question: I searched for matting on your site with no results. Is matting for violets no longer available? Years ago we ordered brown matting for the bottom of large trays. It was treated to avoid algae and other disgusting things.*

Answer: This kind of matting is still available, though we neither sell nor use it. It will also cost you more than you need to pay. Here's what we use. The least expensive acrylic (i.e. man made material) blanket found, at any department store. Queen size blankets can usually be found for less than \$10, much less if on sale. Look for darker colors, since these won't encourage algae growth when wet and under lights. Remove, or cut away, the satin trim and cut to fit the trays or shelves you'll be using them for. If algae remains a problem, use a small amount (a few drops per gallon) of Physan 20 in your water (sellers of this product found in back of this magazine). When the blanket does eventually get unsightly, toss in the washing machine!

*AVSA Office Hours  
Monday - Thursday  
9:00 am - 4:00 pm*



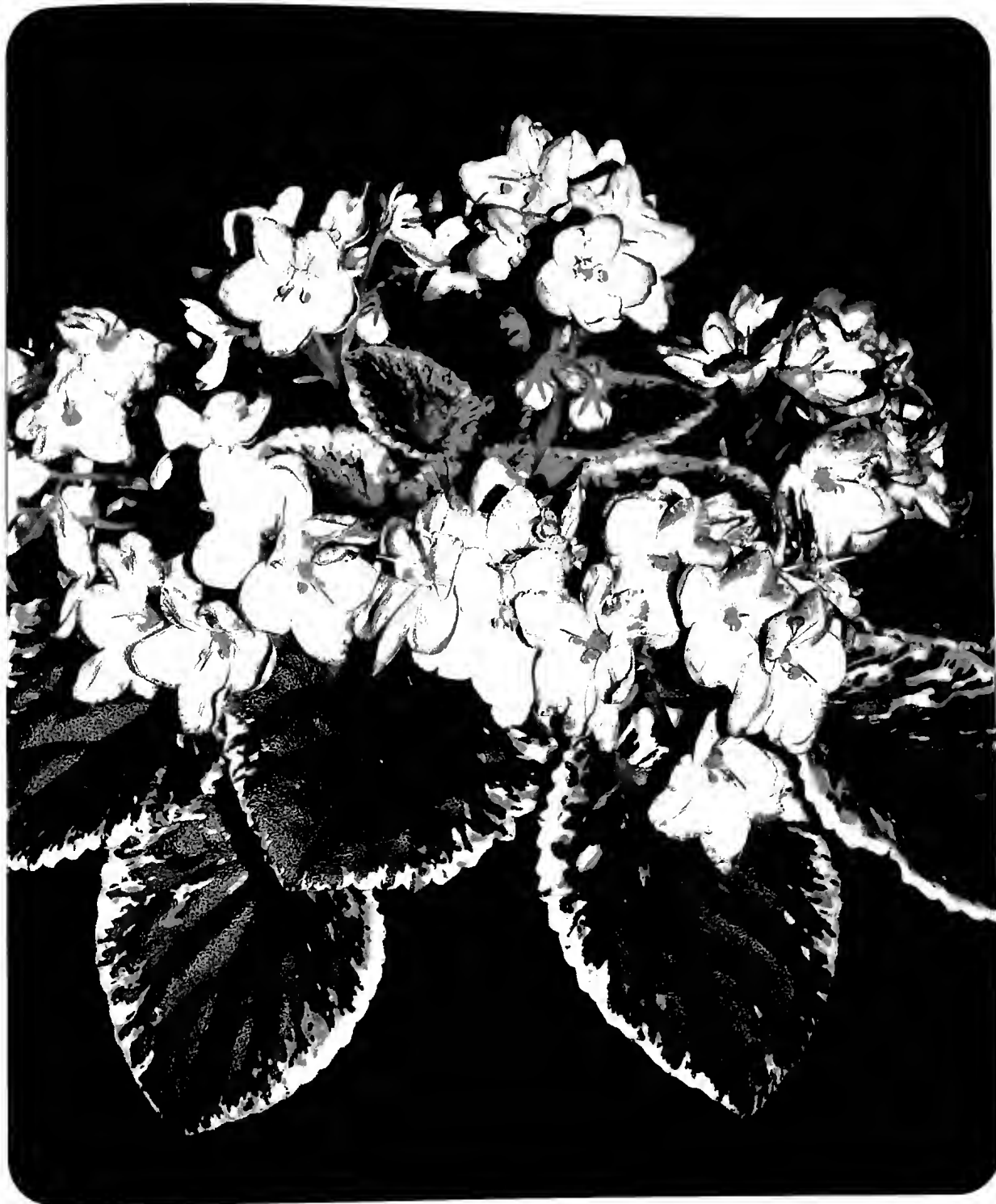


Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## ***Frosty Frolic***

*Exhibited by: Olga Semova*

*Hybridized by: L. Lyon*

*Standard*

# A Family Portrait

By Georgene Albrecht

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I am featuring the lovely plant on the opposite page, *Saintpaulia* 'Rob's Jitterbug'.

This lovely plant of *Saintpaulia* 'Rob's Jitterbug' was grown by Debbie McInnis of Indiana. Debbie won Sweepstakes at the Detroit convention with 49 blue ribbons. She has been growing only three years. What an accomplishment! She gives credit to the Cincinnati, OH, club where she has had wonderful mentors. It goes to prove a point: *nothing is better than real techniques, taught by experienced growers, doing hands-on demonstrations.* Join a club, and you will be more satisfied than watching a computer monitor.

Not only was she presented with numerous awards, her article in AVM in 2011 was selected as one of the best that year. She is multi-talented, and we thank her for entering all her plants. What devotion to drive them hundreds of miles! The *African Violet Magazine* has already published photos of her award-winning plants. Look for them. Congratulations, Debbie.

## MILDEW

As we start this New Year of cool nights and warmer days, mildew may be a problem. There is an easy spray for use on mildew inside, or on outdoor plants. Mix one quart water with one tablespoon of baking soda and add five drops of



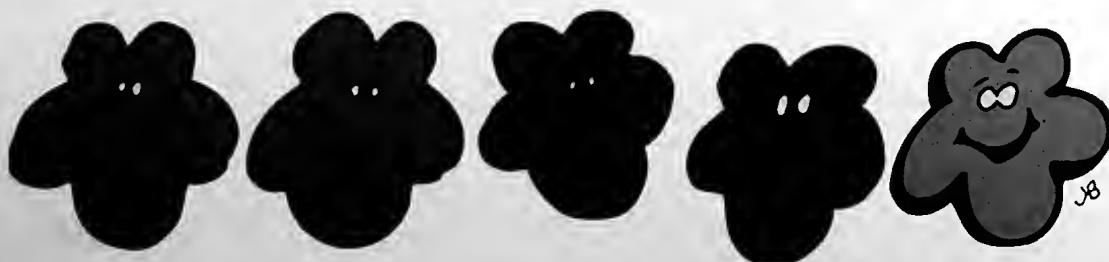
dishwashing detergent, such as Ivory liquid. Avoid using detergents with degreasers.

Also, see the advertisement for Physan in this magazine. It is effective. Keep air circulating and try to keep the temperature above 70 degrees F. If it is cooler, do not use a fan which might blow the spores around.

Isolate any plant that you see the tell-tale, white-grey, mist on the top of leaves. A Lysol spray may also be effective, but be careful not to aim the nozzle directly at the plant tissue. Most growers recommend spraying above the plants and allowing the mist to fall onto the plant. Shake all sprays before using. One grower tells me that she has not had any mildew since using a potting soil of Pro-Mix BX with mycorrhizae, which is available everywhere. If you have this mix, **do not add more mycorrhizae.**

## VIRUS

Virus continues its nasty invasion of gesneriads, especially African-violets. The more trading or/or purchase of plant material, the more viruses are spread. Always remember that a plant can look perfectly healthy, not showing any symptoms, until months or even years later. All conditions must be favorable for the virus to grow when the plant is under stress. Beware of buying online. Some sellers have no knowledge of virus.





*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## ***Rob's Jitterbug***

*Exhibited by: Debbie McInnes*

*Hybridized by: R. Robinson*

*Semiminiature*

## Documenting Your Violet Adventures

By Mary S. Schaeffer

Few people think about documenting their violet collections when they first start growing. They get a few violets, enjoy them, and then maybe get a few more. Before long, you may have violets everywhere and no clue as to which varieties. And, if you are like me, you may find yourself, on occasion, actually buying a violet you already own. This should be the red flag you need to start keeping records. Let's take a look at the different types of records kept and how each will benefit growers. And, let me go on record as saying while I wish I did everything discussed in this article, in real life, I only manage to squeeze in about half this stuff.

### The Basic Inventory

I carefully record each plant I get, noting its name, where I got it, who gave it to me, or where I purchased it and the date of acquisition. I keep this information in an Excel spreadsheet. I also note whether I started with a plant, cutting, or leaf. This makes it easy to search when looking for something. Others keep their inventory in a Word file or a notebook.

Before heading out to a plant show or sale, I sort the list alphabetically and print it out. I can then refer to it before purchasing new plants. And, if I actually checked my inventory in the throes of the plant sale, I might never buy a duplicate. Unfortunately, sometimes in the excitement of the sale, I forget to look.

It's also nice if you win a prize, to be able to thank the person who originally gave you the plant, if that was the case. And finally, for me anyway, when a plant is doing particularly well for me, I like to also think of the person who gave it to me.



### Ongoing Diary

Many growers alternate fertilizers. Some water once a week, but others alternate their schedule depending on the season and the weather. By keeping a diary (either electronic or on paper) of your actions, you'll have a scientific record to refer back to when trying to determine what worked and what didn't.

An interesting way to do this is to set up a blog. You can then record your actions and observations online, perhaps even documenting some of your beauties photographically.

### Repotting Schedule

Do you know when was the last time you repotted each plant, or do you use my approach of repotting right before the pot bursts? While I do repot several months before a show, I tend to focus on those that have a shot of going to the big event. I have good intentions about the rest, but you know what they say about the relationship between good intentions and the Road to Hell.

It is strongly recommended that each standard violet be repotted at least once a year, although twice is better. Miniatures and semi-miniatures really should be repotted more frequently, with some expert growers repotting them every three or four months.

Keeping track of when you last repotted each violet is the first step towards growing really beautiful violets. It will allow you to check to see if the plant needs repotting on a regular basis instead of waiting until the plant is all but screaming for help.

### Grow to Show Schedule

As those who regularly show their plants com-

petitively are painfully aware, even sticking religiously to the Grow to Show Schedule developed by Pauline Bartholomew is no guarantee of a blooming plant on show day. Some of our houses are warmer than others; certain varieties take longer to bloom or may bloom more quickly. There are dozens of variables that can affect how and when a plant blooms.

By tracking every step you take in those all-important three months before a show, you'll begin to get an idea on how to tweak the Grow to Schedule to get the best results from your growing environment. We can learn from our past experiences, but only if we document them and adjust accordingly.

So to get the best results for the next show 15 months from now, start keeping track of what you are doing to get ready for the current show. And don't forget to write down not only what you do, but how your plants responded. You might even make a few notes after your show about whether you should have started a week earlier, a week later, or other changes that might produce better results next year.

### **Where's the Violet?**

I just had a friend ask me for a leaf of a plant that I am certain I have, but I could not find it. Part of the reason this happens is because when the plants aren't in bloom it's difficult to tell some of them apart. And, if you can't remember where you put the violet, finding a specific plant can be a challenge. If you are forever rearranging your plants to make room for growing plants or a new addition, you will find that after a while, you don't know where a good portion of your collection is.

To avoid this problem, keep track of which

stand and perhaps even which tray each plant is on. With this information, you'll have narrowed your search and be able to locate a particular item rather easily.

### **Using the Information**

Now you may be reading all this thinking "but this sounds like a bit of work and it really takes me away from my violets" and you'd be correct. But it does save you a bit of extra work when you can't find something. And, as we discussed, if you are diligent about checking your lists when you go to a show, it will help you avoid buying duplicates!

There's another way good documentation can help you. We all know that it is next to impossible to identify a violet once it loses its label. That's because so many are so similar. However, if you can narrow the universe of possible suspects, the task just might be manageable.

Let's suppose you've lost a label, and the plant blooms, and it has a red bloom with a white edge, and the foliage is variegated. By looking through your inventory, you may be able to figure out what the plant is. For, if you only have one plant that fits that description, the answer is obvious. Other times you'll narrow it down to two or three possibilities, and once you look at pictures (say in FC2), the answer will be apparent. This is one reason why some folks keep this information as part of their inventory.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Hopefully, I've convinced you that some amount of record keeping and documentation of what you do is a good idea. How much you decide to do is a personal choice, depending on what you want to get out of this wonderful hobby.

**The AVSA Library Complete List of  
Rentals can now be found on the  
AVSA Web Site.  
[www.AVSA.org](http://www.AVSA.org)**



# Another Virus on African Violets?

By Ronn Nadeau, PhD

During the 1980s, I advertised "Dr Ronn's" plant disease diagnosis service. Using a binocular microscope, I examined plant and soil samples mailed to us by AV growers. Diseases we diagnosed were caused by cyclamen mites, soil and aerial mealybugs, thrips, fungus gnats and their larvae, and crown rot. Back then, no thought was given to viruses as a problem on African violets. That sure has changed since the discovery that western flower thrips can infect African violets with impatiens necrotic spot virus (INSV) and destroy them.

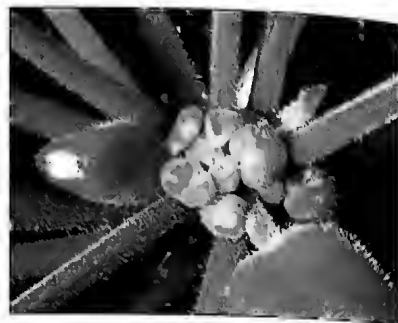
I grow roses in my yard. But what has that to do with a virus on African violets? During this summer and last, most of my rose bushes, consisting mainly of *Knockout* and *Carpet Rose Scarlet* cultivars, have been killed by a dastardly disease. Using the internet, I learned that the disease, first noticed in 1941, is called Rose Rosette disease (RRD). For unknown reasons, RRD has flared up in recent years and is now of serious concern to rose gardeners and producers alike. It is a worldwide problem.

Through extensive research, it has been proven that RRD is ultimately caused by a virus, Rose Rosette Virus (RRV), which is injected into rose plants by a mite named *Phyllocoptes fructiphilis*. This virus, which has been isolated and characterized [1], is a new member of the genus *Emaravirus*.



The symptoms of RRD on roses remind me of the damage that cyclamen mites cause on

are of RRD on one of my rose bushes and an AV with cyclamen mite damage.



Insecticides and miticides do not prevent progression of RRD once the RRV has been injected into a rose plant. There is no cure, and the infected plant should be disposed of promptly. Sound familiar? That's what we should do with African violets infected by either INSV or cyclamen mites. I'm suggesting that cyclamen mites inject a plant virus (or other pathogen) into African violets, and that it's the virus that brings on the damage and death.

The situation is similar for African violets diseased by INSV, because killing the thrips at that stage will do no good. To prevent plants from infection by a virus, one must prevent the vector, an insect or a mite, from injecting its virus particles. Once those particles are in the plant's cells, the virus quickly multiplies and hijacks the plant's genetic system.

I have reviewed all of the AVM articles from 2009 to present that contained at least a mention of mites, thrips, or INSV. All of the authors agree on the need to keep western flower thrips away from our plants using screens, sticky cards, and other physical barriers. Most of the authors also advise the use of chemicals, because barriers are by no means foolproof. I agree with the barriers plus chemicals approach. In the following article I discuss four pesticides that growers could use to deal with the vectors that inject plant viruses into African violets.

African violets. Similarities include stunted new growth, deformed and twisted leaves and stems, off-color foliage, and slow but steady progression of toward death. The photos shown here

[1] Laney, Alma G, Keller, Karen E, Martin, Robert R, and Ioannis, Tzanetakakis, E (2011). "A discovery 70 years in the making: characterization of the Rose rosette virus". *J Gen Virol* 92, 1727 - 1732.

# How Best to Protect African Violets from INSV and Other Viruses

By Ronn Nadeau, PhD

## Introduction

The western flower thrips, *Frankliniella occidentalis*, transmits impatiens necrotic spot virus (INSV), a fatal disease of African violets. The virus has brought on a sense of alarm amongst AV growers. And, as explained in the previous article, it may be that a different virus causes the severe damage to AVs that for a long time has been attributed solely to cyclamen mites. This article proposes a program for eliminating, not just controlling, thrips and mites in AV grow areas, be they in homes or commercial greenhouses. The program has three parts:

1. Physical barriers such as closed doors and windows, sealed cracks, pets not allowed in the grow area, careful people, disbudding and isolating plants home from a show.
2. Chemical barriers, prophylactic spray applications using 2-component sprays (insecticide and miticide mixtures) to establish a "clean" group of plants, and then to maintain a pest-free state of readiness against vector attack. Pesticide treatments would follow Integrated Pest Management (IPM) guidelines.
3. Vigilance and monitoring, including use of ELISA INSV testing, sticky cards, and watchful eyes.

Excellent articles on thrips and INSV have appeared in AVM over the past three years. Neil Lipson (Vol 64, No. 5, p 12) advised growers on what to do when returning plants from a show: disbud totally, add imidacloprid to the soil, put each plant in a plastic bag, spray inside the bag with Avid, and leave the plant in the bag for a week. But that seems impractical if you have a lot of plants or if you are a commercial grower. Pat Hancock (Vol 64, No. 4, p 34) stressed the need to be vigilant for thrips and for completely isolating new plants. Sandra Skalski (Vol 63, No. 3, p 50) described INSV and the related TOSPO tomato virus as nonliving infectious material needing a

vector, the western flower thrips, to get inside a plant, and said that infected thrips can transmit INSV after feeding for only 5 to 10 minutes. She advised to act quickly after detection of thrips. Disbud everything and spray three times with Conserve SC at 5-7 day intervals to catch all stages of thrips. Sandra's article has photos showing plants with INSV symptoms. Georgene Albrecht (Vol 64, No. 4, p 35) counseled growers to not be frightened by INSV, but rather to take steps to control the vector insect. The photos in Georgene's article are quite helpful. In addition, she gave information about ELISA kits that test for INSV in plant tissue.

Damage from INSV starts out mildly, can mimic other AV problems, and can be present without showing symptoms. Thus, the ELISA test for INSV is an important weapon in the struggle against this virus. Using a leaf from a suspect plant and an INSV ELISA kit, one can test for the presence of INSV in a leaf sample. If the result is positive, the plant must be discarded; if negative, it is probably free of the virus, but false negatives are possible. It is best to use a leaf sample with necrotic damage.

In agriculture it is not possible to completely eliminate mites and insects from a field. Farmers aim at *control*, which is a balancing act between how much money is put onto the field versus what the harvest will bring. However, African violets are grown continuously in greenhouses and homes. There, low levels of virus vectors cannot be tolerated because they would continuously infect plants, even if at a slow pace.

For these reasons, I advocate the preemptive, prophylactic use of pesticides to make AVs poisonous to virus vectors before the plants are infected. This strategy ensures that when a vector finds a pretreated plant, it will be incapacitated in the shortest possible time, giving the plant its best chance to remain healthy. This approach is a

bit like the prophylactic use of ivermectin in humans to kill nematodes that cause river blindness in 3rd world populations. Ivermectin is a close relative of abamectin, which is one of the four compounds proposed for use in the program under discussion.

The program proposes the use of two insecticides and two miticides, all of which are water soluble and compatible in mixtures. It uses them in insecticide/miticide pairs (2-component sprays). As explained in greater detail later in this article, the program would begin by preparing a 2-component insecticide/miticide mixture by combining some Conserve SC (spinosad) insecticide with some Abamectin (abamectin) miticide in water, and spraying three times, thoroughly, at 5-7 day intervals. In order to follow IPM guidelines for minimizing the buildup of pesticide resistance, the next round of spraying would be conducted with a different insecticide/miticide pair, Akari 5SC (fenpyroximate) and Dominion 2L (imidacloprid). The pesticide sprayings would be conducted at relatively frequent intervals to assure the integrity of the chemical barrier, especially during early spring and summer.

From my experience as an organic chemist in the field of herbicides, I am aware of the reservations that people have about using pesticides. We must use them with respect and handle them with care. That is why, in the following paragraphs, I discuss each compound, its history, toxicity, and other characteristics, in the hope that AV growers will feel confident and comfortable using them. Later in the article, I describe using these pesticides, their prices, availability, dilutions, concentrations, and suggest schedules for their advantageous application.

The four suggested liquid pesticide formulations are all water soluble and none has properties that would prevent combining any of them to make multi-component spray solutions. All four are stable as formulated and when diluted with water in spray solutions. However, the formulations and spray solutions should be kept out of sunlight to prevent photolysis of active ingredients. The four actives all have different modes of action, as indicated in the Resistance Group col-

umn of Table 1. The data in Tables 1 and 2 were mainly collected from Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs), product Specimen Labels, and the Hummert online catalog. Wikipedia was very helpful.

### **Abamectin (Identical to Avid).**

The Abamectin that I use is sold by Nufarm Americas, Inc. It is called "Abamectin SPC, 0.15EC" and contains 2% abamectin in quart bottles. Abamectin is a fermentation product of a soil bacterium, *Streptomyces avermitilis*, and is a mixture of eight avermectins, but primarily avermectins B1a and avermectin B1b.

Abamectin's rat acute LD50 (300 mg/kg) puts it in Toxicity Category II, moderately toxic. The following toxicological tests gave favorable results for abamectin: mutagenicity, carcinogenicity, reproductive and developmental toxicity, and genotoxicity. Thus, of the five pesticide formulations described in this article, Abamectin is the one most toxic to mammals. However, the Abamectin MSDS states "Slightly toxic if ingested based on toxicity studies."

Abamectin is both a miticide and insecticide, but is primarily used against mites. It is effective on ten mite varieties, including cyclamen, and can suppress aphids, thrips, and whiteflies. It is effective at a low use rate, 0.0013% active ingredient in spray solution (Table 2), leaving no visible residues on foliage. This insecticide/miticide has both contact and translaminar activity, meaning that it can penetrate the leaf surface and form a reservoir of active ingredient within the leaf. Abamectin provides up to 28 days of residual activity. It is toxic to bees, but not so after treated foliage has dried. Do not use it when bees are foraging.

### **Conserve SC**

Conserve SC, a product of Dow AgroSciences, LLC, is a formulation containing 11.6% spinosad. In 1997 it was registered as a pesticide in the United States for use on crops. Spinosad is produced by fermentation of a bacterial species named *Saccharopolyspora spinosa*.

In addition to its low acute toxicity in rats (5000 mg/kg), spinosad gave favorable results



in the following tests: chronic toxicity, carcinogenicity, developmental toxicity, reproductive toxicity, and gentoxicity. Spinosad is used for treating dogs and cats against fleas in products named Comfortis and Trifexis. Because spinosad is a natural product and has very low acute toxicity, it is on the National Organic Standards Board List of Approved Organic Pesticides.

Spinosad is primarily an insecticide but has suppressive activity against some mites. It is highly active against many insects, but the Specimen Label advises that more than one application may be needed against western flower thrips. It acts both by contact and ingestion and provides about 3 weeks of residual activity. Due to its very low mammalian toxicity, Conserve SC is labeled for use as many as five times on some crops, and the crop can be harvested as early as 1 day after an application of the insecticide. The cost for making a gallon of Conserve SC spray solution is about \$0.57, compared to \$0.23 for Abamectin SPC, \$1.25 for Akari, and 2 cents for Dominion 2L.

#### **Akari 5SC.**

Akari 5SC, produced by Sipro Corporation, has as its active ingredient 5% fenpyroximate. It is labeled for use against cyclamen mites, spider mites, and several other mites at a rate of 0.24 oz (7.2 ml) per gallon. It is a contact miticide having no translaminar or systemic activity. Therefore, good spray coverage is necessary.

The rat acute LD50 for Akari is 810 mg/kg and 600 mg/kg for male and female rats, respectively, making this a Toxicity Category III (Slightly toxic) pesticide. The following tests on fenpyroximate gave favorable results: chronic cancer, teratogenicity, reproductive effects, neurotoxicity, and mutagenicity. Akari is highly toxic to fish. Do not use near open waters.

Akari should be used in a spray schedule with a miticide from a different Resistance Group because mites are quite adept at developing resistance to miticides. It thus fits in well with Abamectin as a rotational partner because

Abamectin and Akari are in different Resistance Groups (Table 1).

Akari provides stop-feeding action together with a cessation of egg laying. Mites die in 4 to 7 days, and Akari provides 3-4 weeks of residual activity. Under severe mite conditions, shorter spray intervals should be employed, according to the Akari Label. Akari was tested on AVs at a 3X rate and found nonphytotoxic.

#### **Dominion 2L and Mantra 1G.**

Dominion 2L, a liquid formulation pesticide sold at DoMyOwnPestControl.com, has imidacloprid (21.4%) as its active ingredient. Mantra 1G is also an imidacloprid insecticide, but is formulated as the active ingredient (1%) absorbed onto inert granules.

The rat acute LD50 values for Dominion 2L and Mantra are 1190 mg/kg and >5000 mg/kg, respectively. In addition to the favorable acute toxicity data, imidacloprid gave favorable results in the following tests: rat acute dermal, eye irritant, sensitization, carcinogenicity, mutagenicity, and reproductive effects.

Imidacloprid is the most widely used insecticide in the world. The discovery of imidacloprid, with its favorable toxicity package as compared to other insecticides on the market in the 1990s, prompted the EPA to employ it to replace more toxic insecticides. It is an insect neurotoxin belonging to a class of chemicals called neonicotinoids. Because imidacloprid binds much more strongly to insect neuron receptors than to mammalian neuron receptors, it is selectively more toxic to insects than to mammals.

Imidacloprid is a systemic insecticide that readily passes through leaf surfaces and moves to other parts of the plant. When applied on soil as either the liquid or the granular formulation, imidacloprid is absorbed by roots of plants, bushes, and trees, and kill bugs that chew on those plants. It is compatible with commonly used fungicides, miticides, liquid fertilizers, and other commonly used insecticides, with which it can be combined to make multi-component spray solutions. Imidacloprid is very toxic to bees and must not be applied when bees are foraging.

## Spray Schedules

The four liquid formulation pesticides have the following in common. Away from sunlight, the formulations and their spray solutions are stable under normal use. All are water soluble, permitting easy preparation of 2-pesticide spray solutions. Within the group of four liquid pesticides, two are primarily insecticides and two primarily miticides and all four are in different Resistance Groups. Mantra, the granular formulation of imidacloprid, is used separately, as explained below. None of the four is a Restricted Use pesticide.

Most importantly, all four of these pesticides have favorable toxicity ratings (Table 1). So, in my opinion, anyone who can read and follow directions and exercise care in what they are doing can advantageously use these pesticides on African violets. And if you will, think of it this way. Growing AVs is becoming more challenging, which means more interesting. Many AV growers will respond to the scientist in them and take on the challenge.

The following spray schedules are examples of how I think successful prophylactic programs can be designed for protecting African violets in the home or greenhouse. Tweak them to your liking. A lot of people know a lot more about these matters than I do, so please take my recommendations with that caveat. You must consider whether they are reasonable for your situation. Unfortunately, some of these pesticides come mainly in quart quantities, which for small growers is enough for 100 years. There will be a need for small growers to cooperatively share quart amounts.

**Spray Schedule A.** (You could also start with Schedule B.)

**Purpose:** Establish a group of AVs free of pests and INSV.

At the beginning of the overall program, it is desirable to detect and discard all plants containing INSV, because no pesticide can cure that. However, some plants in the group might have the virus and go undetected for a time. Proceed with the schedule anyway. If you are pretty sure your plant is free of the virus, great, but still proceed with Schedule A.

Start Schedule A by spraying your group of AVs with a 2-component insecticide/miticide (Conserve SC and Abamectin) solution, 3 times, 5-7 days apart. Table 2 shows that you should use 3 ml of Conserve SC and 2.4 ml (1 1/2 tsp) of Abamectin per gallon of water. When spraying, wet the plant as thoroughly as you can. If you have leftover spray solution, you can use it later, as long as you keep it away from sunlight in the meantime.

Inspect the plants throughout the Schedule A period and remove those with INSV symptoms. Monitor using sticky cards in the area. After completing the 3rd spraying, just wait and watch the plants for two or three weeks. During that time, they will still have protection due to residual activity from the initial spraying. Remove plants that look like they might have INSV. Do ELISA tests as needed. If the group or the area still has mites or thrips (unlikely), repeat Schedule A.

If the group appears free of mites, thrips, and INSV after the spraying and waiting period, proceed from there with maintenance schedules (below) while continuing to watch for INSV plants. The purpose of the maintenance schedules is to keep your plants free of pests and virus while still monitoring them carefully. If there are still INSV plants present after two Schedule A rounds, each taking around 5-6 weeks to complete, you can either conduct Schedule B sprayings on the group and continue to watch for diseased plants, or start anew using Schedule A on a new group of plants.

**Spray Schedule B.** Can also be used ahead of Schedule A.

**Purpose:** Same as with Schedule A: Establish a group of AVs free of pests and INSV.

Prepare a 2-component insecticide/miticide (Dominion 2L/Akari 5SC) solution. (If Akari is not available, use Abamectin instead.) Spray the group 3 times, 5-7 days apart. Table 2 shows that you should use 0.45 ml of Dominion 2L and 7.2 ml of Akari (or if substituting, 2.4 ml of Abamectin) per gallon of water.

The rest is the same as Schedule A. Hopefully, by this time you will have a group of plants with no pests or virus.

## Spray Schedule M.

Purpose: Maintain a group of plants pest and virus free.

Spray once every 3 weeks (the pesticides in this article all have residual activity for 2-4 weeks) with any of the following 2-component solutions. Rotate the solutions. Each one contains an insecticide and a miticide. In addition, apply Mantra 1G topically to the surface of the growing medium in each pot, according to Mantra Label directions. Thus, when using Solutions M-1 and M-3, three pesticides will be in use at the same time. I think there should be no phytotoxicity problems with using multiple pesticides at the same time, because all of the pesticides discussed here are applied at low concentrations and are nonphytotoxic.

## Solution

M-1  
M-2  
M-3  
M-4

## Pesticides

Conserve SC/Abamectin  
Dominion 2L/Abamectin  
Conserve SC/Akari 5SC  
Dominion 2L/Akari 5SC

## Some closing notes.

Keep good records. Proper timing of sprayings is very important. Prepare a calendar ahead of time and record everything you do. Small sprayers, quart and pint sizes, are available online. When needing to measure out small volumes of pesticide, consider preparing a more dilute stock solution from the original formulation. If you use the methods given in this article, please report your results, what worked and what did not. And finally, as a service to AV growers, I conduct tests for INSV using Agdia's ELISA Kit. I welcome questions and comments from readers. Contact me at AVSEEDS@yahoo.com.

**Table 1. Toxicity and Pesticide Resistance Information**

Product	Rat Acute oral LD50 (mg/kg body weight) [1]	Toxicity Category	Resistance Group
<b>Abamectin</b> , same as <b>Avid</b> (2% Avermectins, Liquid)	300 [2]	II, Moderately Toxic	6
<b>Conserve SC</b> (11.6% Spinosad, Liquid)	>5000 [3]	IV, Relatively nontoxic	5
<b>Akari 5SC</b> (5% Fenpyroximate, Liquid)	810 M, 600 F [4]	III Slightly Toxic	21
<b>Dominion 2L</b> (21.4% Imidacloprid, Liquid)	1190 [5]	III Slightly Toxic	4
<b>Mantra 1G</b> (1% Imidacloprid, Granules)	>5000 [6]	IV, Relatively nontoxic	4

[1] LD50: The higher the number, the safer the product.

"The term to describe acute toxicity is LD<sub>50</sub>. LD means *lethal* dose and the

50 means that the dose was acutely lethal to 50% of the animals to whom the chemical was administered under controlled laboratory conditions." From: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pi008>.

[2] MSDS: <http://www.cdms.net/LDat/mpUJP001.pdf> (2009).

[3] MSDS: <http://www.cdms.net/LDat/mp24P000.pdf> (2010).

[4] MSDS: [http://www.sepro.com/documents/Akari\\_MSDS.pdf](http://www.sepro.com/documents/Akari_MSDS.pdf) (2008).

[5] MSDS: [http://www.controlsolutionsinc.com/data/products/other/139\\_Dominion%20L\\_MSDS.pdf](http://www.controlsolutionsinc.com/data/products/other/139_Dominion%20L_MSDS.pdf) (2007).

[6] MSDS: <http://www.cdms.net/LDat/mp8ED004.pdf> (2012).

Table 2. Pesticide Label Information and Product Costs

Pesticide	Kills	Label recommended applications	Vol. of Product needed to make 1 gallon of spray sol'n, per Label directions [1]	Target conc'n of Active in Spray Solution (%) [1][2]	Cost of Product [3]	Cost to make 1 gallon of spray solution (\$) [1]	Product Volume
Abamectin, same as Avid (2% Avermectins, Liquid)	cyclamen mites, leafminers, thrips, aphids [4]	3 times, 7 days apart	0.08 oz, 2.37 ml	0.0013 [4]	\$93.20 per quart	\$0.23	1 quart, 960 ml
Conserve SC (11.6% Spinosad, Liquid)	thrips and many other insects [5]	5 times per season (max); reapp'n. 5 days (min)	0.10 oz, 2.96 ml	0.0181 [5]	\$183.75 per quart	\$0.57	1 quart, 960 ml
Akari SSC (5% Fenpyroximate, Liquid)	cyclamen mites. Suppresses mealybugs [6]	3 times, 5 - 7 days apart	0.24 oz, 7.2 ml	0.0093 [6]	\$166.50 per quart	\$1.25	1 quart, 960 ml
Dominion 2L (21.4% Imidacloprid, Liquid)	thrips, aphids, fungus gnats, mealy bugs [7]	Begin foliar app'ts prior to high pest populations and reapply as needed.	0.015 oz, 0.45 ml	0.0025 [7]	\$27.95 per 27.5 oz bottle	\$0.02	27.5 pz, 825 ml
Mantra 1G (1% Imidacloprid, Granules)	thrips, aphids, fungus gnats, mealy bugs [8]	Apply 1/4 - 1/2 level scoop per 3.5 - 5 inch pot. As needed.	Granules	Granules [8]	\$46.00 per 5 lb jug	\$0.02 per 3 1/2 " pot	5 lb, 2270g

1. When the label suggested two acceptable rates, the higher rate (2X) was used to obtain these numbers.  
2. Target % concentration of spray solution = [Volume (ml) of Product specified on Label for 1 gallon of Spray solution] X [% Active in Product] / 3840 ml.  
3. Prices as of Nov. 2012. The products were purchased at Hummert, except for Dominion 2L, bought online at domyownpestcontrol.com.  
4. Nufarm Abamectin Specimen Label: <http://www.cdms.net/LDa/Id9OR002.pdf>.  
5. Dow Conserve SC Specimen Label: <http://www.cdms.net/Ida/Id24P002.pdf>.  
6. SePRO Akari SSC Specimen Label: <http://www.entomology.umn.edu/cues/mnia/akeri.pdf>.  
7. Dominion 2L Specimen Label: [http://www.domyownpestcontrol.com/msds/Dominion\\_2L\\_label.pdf](http://www.domyownpestcontrol.com/msds/Dominion_2L_label.pdf).  
8. Nufarm Mantra 1G Specimen label: <http://www.cdms.net/LDa/Id8ED003.pdf>.

Product	% Active in Product	Amount of Product to make 1 gallon of water spray solution of the Target Percent Active (ml)	Target Concentration of Active in Spray Solution	Cost of Product	Cost to make 1 gallon spray solution (\$)
Abamectin, same as Avid (2% Avermectins, Liquid)	2.0	2.37	#REF!	\$93.20	960
Conserve SC (11.6% Spinosad, Liquid)	11.6	2.96	#REF!	\$183.75	960
Akari SSC (5% Fenpyroximate, Liquid)	5.0	7.20	#REF!	\$166.50	960
Dominion 2L (21.4% Imidacloprid, Liquid)	21.4	0.45	#REF!	\$27.95	825
Mantra 1G (1% Imidacloprid, Granules)	1.0	1.03	NA	\$46.00	2270

# Designing an African Violet Room

By Neil Lipson

When Hurricane Sandy ripped off my roof, I was in shock. The next day, after the cleanup team threw away my possessions, I was left with four empty offices. What to do? Make an African violet room, that's what!

I looked at what I had and started from the ground up. First, super insulating is a must. You want to keep your energy costs low. I had 6 inch studs in the walls, so I went with R-19 batts. For the ceiling, which is 2x12 beams, I used 12 inch batts, which is R-38. This will keep the heating/AC costs low. I already had thermopane windows, so they were set to go.

Now, for the vapor barrier: I wanted a really good vapor barrier to keep in the humidity. Violets can withstand a very high humidity but not a low one. If the room is not 100% contained with a vapor barrier on the insulation, you can put a coat of Zinsser cover stain paint. However, make sure before you paint this primer, lightly sand with 400 grade, or the final coat won't stick. It needs some "teeth" to adhere. If you use a plastic strip-pable wall paper, that will act as a vapor barrier.

Paint the walls the brightest white to give maximum reflectivity. Paint the trim with any color you want, even violet (which is what I'll do). Never paint the walls with a dark paint, regardless what your architect tells you. You want the most efficiency you can get from your fluorescent lamps.

When your fixtures need a replacement ballast, use a solid state, high efficiency ballast, which costs a little more but will pay for itself. They don't give off heat and last much longer.

If you're going to heat the room, buy a heater with a REAL thermostat that you can set to a particular temperature, not one that has no settings on it. Why? You want to set it to a particular temperature like 72°F, not guessing with a non-calibrated rheostat. Even if you try to calibrate it yourself, it may change depending on whether it is a cold day, or just a cool one. Check out the iLiving heater or the Lifesmart heater. By the way,

ALL electric heaters are 100% efficient. One is not better than the other, except in the airflow and thermostat accuracy. The airflow will even out, regardless.

It is also possible to add a thermostatic switch to a cheap heater to get it to respond like a top-quality thermostatic heater. I will research what parts to buy at Home Depot to do this and make this information available in a future article, or sooner, on the Facebook African Violet Nerd site.

Now, for the room. Pick one that is inside the house or has no outdoor exits. You don't want thrips. If it has windows, don't open them. There is no screen that will keep thrips out. Why the concern with thrips? They spread INSV. Everything is curable except for this.

Now, for airflow, read this carefully. If you put clear polyethylene behind your light stands, the air will stratify. The hot air will rise to the top. To keep the temps even, put a small whisper fan near the middle of the light stand slightly to the side to circulate the air. This will also reduce the chances of mildew on the plants. The placement of the fan is really not that critical, and any circulation solves the problem.

For the floor, vinyl tile is best. Carpet is not so good when things are spilled. If you do get carpet, get an industrial grade nylon carpet with a short pile. It will last forever and is easy to clean. Place a cordless handy vacuum near the lightstand. It won't take you long to figure out why.

Leave space on a wall to mount your blues, Best in Class, and if you're REALLY good, your Best in Show ribbons.

Once my room is finished, I will take some photos. The next project? The plant pathology lab. Good luck.

*Neil Lipson is vice-president of the Springfield African Violet Club and does computer consulting full time. He can be reached at [lipson@att.net](mailto:lipson@att.net) or 610-356-6183 11 am to 10 pm EST. If you email, please include your phone number, if possible.*



# Small Talk

By Laurel D. Goretsky

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If I gave a title to my columns, this one would be called 'Oh, The Mistakes That I Have Made!' Although that sort of sounds like a Dr. Seuss book, I promise there will be no clever rhyming involved in this column.

Mistake number 1 is somewhat shown in picture 1. The plant is 'Rob's Willawong'. This is a semi miniature trailer with semi-double bright pink sticktite pansy blossoms and medium green foliage. You may be wondering what the mistake would be in this picture beside the fact that the center of the plant is completely dead looking. My mistake with this plant was that I repotted it and cleaned it up in the center to encourage new growth and then let it get too dry on more than one occasion.



*'Rob's Willawong'*

The next mistake is shown in picture 2. The plant is 'Rob's Astro Zombie' which is a semi miniature with semi-double dark blue-purple star blossoms with rose-pink fantasy. The leaves are dark green and pointed. This is not supposed to be grown as a trailer so it should not have more than one crown. Any suckers you notice on a single-crowned plant should be removed immediately. Allowing a plant to get too many suckers and then letting them grow so large, make it very hard to get back to a nice rosette-shaped, single-crowned plant. Also, the stress of feeding all those suckers



makes that plant likely to sucker again. I don't have any more pictures for illustration, but I do have more mistakes to tell you about. Am I embarrassed about sharing this information with you? Yes, of course, I am! I try to learn from my past mistakes, and if I can help others with what I have learned, then I am happy. If nothing else, maybe some-

body will gain some hope and inspiration from the fact that even 'experienced' growers have issues.

Mistake number 3 is not labeling a plant as soon as it is

repotted. I was sure I would remember the name of a delightful plant I received from a friend at a convention. Days turned into weeks and then weeks to months and guess what? I forgot the name of the plant. Thankfully, I do remember who gave me the plant, and I can contact them to find out what it is. That reminds me I need to send the person an email before I forget who it was!

The final mistake I want to mention is not becoming familiar with new plants that you purchase or receive. You should always read the description in First Class or the Master Variety List. I bought 'Rob's Kalangadoo' at the convention in Detroit. I brought it home and took leaves from it and planted them and repotted the original plant. When the plant didn't survive, I wasn't worried because I had taken leaves. A friend visiting us recently informed me that 'Rob's Kalangadoo' can't be grown from a leaf because it has the unusual chimera leaf. A chimera leafed plant



*'Rob's Astro Zombie'*



is the same as a plant with chimera blossoms and cannot be started from a leaf cutting. If I had read the description, which is listed on [www.violetbarn.com](http://www.violetbarn.com), I would have realized this (again, I am thankful because the special visitor brought suckers of his plant!) It is especially important to read the description of the plant when you are growing miniatures and semi miniatures. This is to ensure

you are growing to the right diameter for a miniature (up to 6 inches) and for a semi miniature (under 8 inches).

Even if you make mistakes, don't give up. Keep on growing!

Until next time, stay happy and healthy. For those of you that were affected by Hurricane Sandy, our thoughts and prayers are with you.



## HEY MR. POSTMAN!

By Kathy Bell, Membership and Promotion Chair

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Look and see if you have an African violet postcard for me? I know it is that time of year when the African Violet Club has their Show and Sale and I don't want to miss it! I signed up to be notified so I know I will be getting a card soon.

Yes, the good old days when you got mail, you really got mail. Now, in the electronic world, millions of emails go out every day. The question is: "Is this the best way to notify the public of our Shows and Sales?"

I do the mailing for my club and I think both email and US mail are good. BUT, I do not think you should do just one or the other, you need to do *both*. Some people like getting paper, or "snail mail," and some like electronic. In March I mailed 340 postcards and over 200 emails. Yes, it costs money to do postcards, but the way my club looks at it is you don't have to sell that many plants to cover that expense, and you are reaching more people which means more sales and more possible members!

You need both options on your sign up sheets so you don't miss anyone. If you just do postcards or emails you might have missed out on new members for your club and AVSA. That is why it is so important to do both. Local clubs, and AVSA, are shrinking because of lack of members.

So what are we going to do to help our clubs and AVSA get more members? Get the word out

to the public about African violets and educate them! Have at least one Show and Sale, a year and then have a Fall Sale. The Fall Sale is a money maker for your club, with very few expenses and it is a great opportunity to get more members!

You also need sign up sheets that say: "Interested in Joining? Come Check Us Out!" Make sure you contact them *within a week* after the Show/Sale so they don't lose interest. Better yet, have them join on the spot and give them a free plant or a few dollars off your membership fee. Make sure you have handouts with information about your club and meeting information to take home.

Another great way to build your membership is to have a day meeting and a night meeting, offering opportunities for those who can't drive at night, and those who work. Put your meeting information in the garden section of your local newspaper just like you should be doing for your Show and Sales, it's free!

We want to keep AVSA alive and well, and we all need to help build membership. Without membership there is no AVSA and membership numbers are going down each year. Please do all you can to build membership in your area.

Also, feel free to contact me if you need help building your membership. My contact information is above.

# 2013 AVSA Convention Awards

Austin, TX

## Specified Awards - Amateur Division

Best Holtkamp Collection - \$500, rosette & coin - Holtkamp Greenhouses

2nd Best Holtkamp Collection - \$200 & rosette - Holtkamp Greenhouses

3rd Best Holtkamp Collection - \$100 & rosette - Holtkamp Greenhouses

Best Robinson Collection - \$200 - The Violet Barn (\$50 gift certificate for a standard collection)

2nd Best Robinson Collection - \$100 - The Violet Barn

Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid Collection - \$300 - Vladimir Kalgin

2nd Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid Collection - \$200 - Vladimir Kalgin

3rd Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid Collection - \$100 - Vladimir Kalgin

Best Buckeye Collection - \$200 - Pat's Patch - Pat Hancock

2nd Best Buckeye Collection - \$100 - Pat's Patch - Pat Hancock

Best Lyndon Lyon Collection - \$200 - Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses - Paul Sorano

2nd Best Lyndon Lyon Collection - \$100 - Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses - Paul Sorano

Best African Violet in Show - \$25 & Silver Memorial for Elmer & Fannie Hall - Ovella Hall (AR)

Best Species - \$50 - Gary & Rhona Thurman (TX)

Best Terrarium - \$25 - Judith Neumann (MN)

Best in Class for Texas Hybridized plants - \$75 - Susan Hill (KS)

Best in Class for Texas Hybridized plants - \$75 - First Austin AVS (TX)

## Specific Variety Awards - Amateur Horticulture

Best "Bertha" - \$25 - Sue Hoffmann (VA)

Best "Concord" - \$100 - Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)

Best "Everdina" - \$50 - Hans Inpijn (CA)

Best "Granger's Wonderland" - \$25 - Steve & Donna Turner (MI)

Best "Greg" - \$50 - First Nighter AV Society (TX)

Best "Hans' Pink Surprise" - \$50 - Hans Inpijn (CA)

Best "Jolly Frills" - \$25 - Hortense & Ray Pittman (TX)

Best "Jolly Star" - \$50 - First Nighter AV Society (TX)

Best "Jolly Texan" - \$25 - Hortense & Ray Pittman (TX)

Best "Ko's Eva Delight" - \$15 - Susan Hapner (MO)

Best "Lonestar Helen Mahr" - \$50 - Richard & Anne Nicholas (TX)

Best "Miss Monet" - \$25 - Mary Corondan (TX)

Best "Nancy Hayes" (trailer) - \$25 - Nancy Hayes (CT)

Best "Optimara Michigan" - \$50 - Michigan State AV Society (MI)

Best "Optimara Ontario" - \$25 - Michigan State AV Society (MI)

Best "Ozio" - \$25 - Mary Corondan (TX)

Best "Picasso" - \$25 - Steve & Donna Turner (MI)

Best "Powwow" - \$25 - Steve & Donna Turner (MI)

Best "Precious Pink" - \$25 - Hortense & Ray Pittman (TX)

Best "Precious Red" - \$25 - Hortense & Ray Pittman (TX)

Best "Range Gal" - \$25 - Meredith Hall (TX)

Best "Rocky Mountain Trail" - \$25 - Towne & Country AV Club of Michigan (MI)

Best "Rodeo Country" - \$75 - Spring Branch African Violet Club (TX)

Best "Shirl's Hawaiian Lei" - \$30 - First Austin AVS & Magic Knight AVS (TX)

2nd Best "Shirl's Hawaiian Lei" - \$20 - First Austin AVS & Magic Knight AVS (TX)

Best "Texas Space Dust" - \$25 - Mary Corondan (TX)

Best "The Alps" - \$100 - Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)

Best "Tiger" - \$25 - Steve & Donna Turner (MI)

Best "Ozark" Sinningia - \$35 - David Harris (MO)

### **Specified Awards - Commercial Division**

- Best Holtkamp Collection - \$300 & Rosette - Holtkamp Greenhouses
- 2nd Best Holtkamp Collection - \$200 & Rosette - Holtkamp Greenhouses
- 3rd Best Holtkamp Collection - \$100 & Rosette - Holtkamp Greenhouses

### **Other Awards - Undesignated - Design**

- \$25 - Albuquerque AV Club (NM)
- \$25 - Janet Riemer (NJ)

### **Other Awards - Undesignated - Commercial**

- \$25 - Dale Martens (IA)

### **Other Awards - Undesignated - Horticulture**

- \$25 - Dale Martens (IA)
- \$25 - Janet Riemer (NJ)
- \$50 - AV Society of Minnesota (MN)
- \$50 - Lakeshore AV Society of Toronto (Canada)
- \$50 - Richard & Anne Nicholas (TX)
- \$100 - Hans Inpijn (CA)
- \$100 - Terry Klemesrud (MN)

### **Other Awards - Undesignated**

- \$25 - Ron & Jan Davidson (TX)
- \$25 - Delaware AV Society (DE)
- \$25 - Sue Hoffmann (VA) in memory of William Sugg
- \$25 - First African Violet Society of Denton (TX)
- \$25 - First Nighter AV Society (TX)
- \$25 - Mary Corondan (TX)
- \$25 - Tustana African Violet Society (CA)
- \$25 - Parmatown African Violet Club (OH)
- \$25 - Leonard Re (CA)
- \$25 - South Coast AV Society (CA)
- \$40 - Emma Bygott (Canada)
- \$50 - Tidewater AV Society (VA)
- \$50 - Kathy Lahti (MN)
- \$50 - Tampa African Violet Society (FL)

- \$50 - AV Club of Burlington County (NJ)
- \$50 - African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa (OK)
- \$50 - AV Council of Southern California (CA)
- \$50 - First Austin AV Society (TX)
- \$50 - Dolores Gibbs (TX)
- \$50 - Penny Smith-Kerker (TX)
- \$75 - Marjorie Bullard (TX)
- \$100 - Bill Foster (TX)
- \$100 - Missouri Valley AV Council
- \$100 - Winston & Laurel Goretsky (Canada)
- \$100 - Tucson African Violet Society (AZ)
- \$100 - Dayton AV Society (OH)
- \$100 - Hans Inpijn (CA)
- \$200 - Lone Star African Violet Council (TX)
- \$200 - Stampede City African Violet Society (Canada)

Thanks to the many individuals, clubs and councils who have offered their generous award support for the 2013 AVSA show in Austin! It is your generosity that makes our show so special.

If your name is not on this list, there is still time to be included in the souvenir convention book. Send your check or money order payable in U.S. funds and made out to 'AVSA' to:

**Judith Carter**

**AVSA Awards Chair**

1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

We look forward to hearing from you! Final deadline to be listed in the Austin Show Souvenir Book is April 15, 2013.

Space requirements limited our list in this issue, so please view a current Awards listing, including the Society awards, on the AVSA web site at [www.avsa.org](http://www.avsa.org) under National Convention. Although every attempt has been made to list awards correctly, we reserve the right to modify or change these listings.



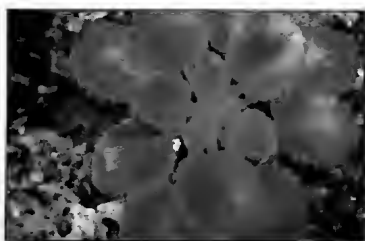
# Warm Water to Kill Mites

By Elena Peralta  
Lima, Peru

A couple of months ago, several of my plants started to show excessively hairy crowns. Some years ago, I had cyclamen mites and the crown leaves were tight, hard, and twisted. So I rejected the possibility of mites because my center leaves did not show those particular symptoms. Now, I was only seeing hairy and stunted crown leaves.

Also, when I had cyclamen mites, in a couple of days, almost all my plants were infected. This made me suspect another cause. And I began to search for information in my African violet books and on the Internet.

Meanwhile, I sprayed Neem oil on all my plants. Most of them seem to like it, and the leaves were very green and shiny. But some suffered like the picture below.



*First Sign*

our plants. He confirmed that I had broad mites and recommended an acaricide, which is poisonous to mites.



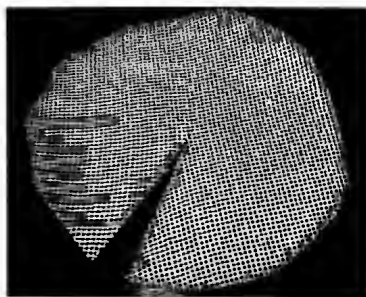
*After Neem Oil Application*

Since I live in a small house and have a pet, I didn't want to use an acaricide so I sought other alternatives in Dr. Charles L. Cole's book *Insect and Mite Pest of African Violets* and Nancy Robitaille's *Insects, Pests, and Diseases of the African Violet Family*. Both books stated that if I immerse infected plants, with pot and soil, for fifteen minutes in water, held precisely at 110°F (43°C), all stages of mites will be eliminated.

I have more than 100 plants, and 90% are

miniatures. The first time I lowered the infected plants, with pot, into the water, they ended floating all over the bowl! Additionally, my thermometer was not properly calibrated and the temperature read 10°C less (fortunately it was not the opposite).

The next day, I calibrated my two thermometers (first with boiled water=100°C/212°F and then with a glass with ice and some water=0°C/32°F). I also decided to cut several circles of net, big enough to cover the pots, and secure it with a rubber band as shown in the picture.



*Net Circle*

then placed on a yogurt maker that maintained the temperature to 43°C (110°F). Covering the bowl with a lid assured that the temperature remained steady.



*Soil Covered with Net*



*Submerged Plants*

After fifteen minutes, I drained the water from the pots and placed the plants on newspapers. With so many plants, I had to split the work over two evenings.

Also, on the Internet, I found that the temperature could be between 43° to 49°C (110°F to 120°F)

and that will destroy mites without damaging the plants. This gave me a range of degrees to maintain the temperature, making my work easier.

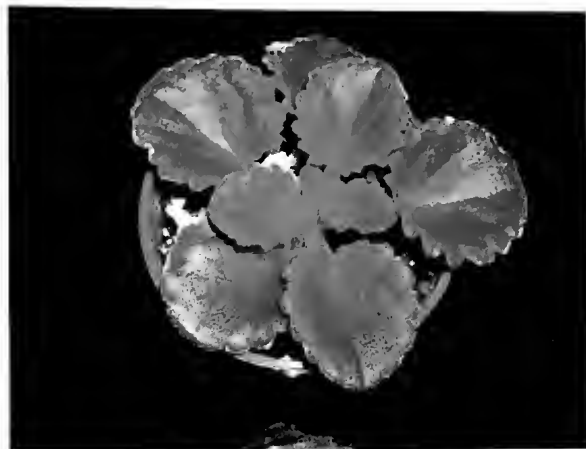
When I used the yogurt maker, I didn't have to add warm water to maintain the temperature for fifteen minutes, but I could not use a big bowl. So the next day I used a tub with water at 48°C (119°F) temperature, and when the temperature of the water lowered to almost 43°C (110°F), I

added hot water carefully to raise it to 47°C-48°C (117°F-119°F) None of my plants were burned or suffered any damage. Also, knowing that this method kills adults, larvae, and eggs, there was no need to repeat the process.

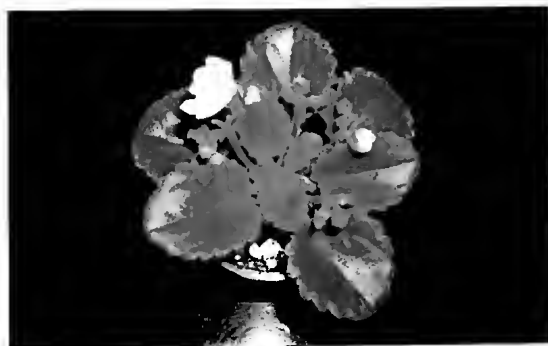
Now, three months have passed and all my plants look nice, healthy, and are starting to bloom. I'm very pleased with this treatment, and if you have the patience, I really recommend it!



*July*



*September*



*October*



*August*



*October*



# An Education Tool in Container Garden Design

By Karyn Cichocki  
Lafayette, NJ

I've been doing design in African violet shows since 1983 and Gesneriad shows since 1995. From a designer's point of view, I find writing out the cards indicating what plant material is used in the design or planting a nuisance.

But my friend, Jill Fischer, said that this is a good tool for both visitors to the show and fellow exhibitors, educating them as to different ways to use the plants. I've always just listed the plant material on the required 5x5 card, but Jill does wonderful drawings for her plantings. She actually draws the plants and put the names next to the drawing. I now do this because I know that I've seen plants used in a container garden and couldn't figure out which plant was which. My drawings aren't as detailed as Jill's, but I do draw an outline of the container, then put the plants in the spot they are planted with their name next to them. If your drawing skills aren't that good, then just put a dot where the plant is and then the plant name next to the dot or even an arrow from the name to the dot. Because I grow lots of gesneriads, I almost use them exclusively in my plantings, using either one or more African violets if for a violet show, and some other bloom gesneriad for the gesneriad show.

When planting container gardens, you want to make sure that you have a tree, shrub, and then a low growing plant, so that you have a transition from the height of your planting to the lowest point. I will take a tray, shop from my plant stands, and make a selection of plants that have a variety of height, color, and texture, usually more than I really need.

I usually start with the tree and then work my-

self down to the lowest part of the planting. Plain peat moss is used as my soil, and then I don't have to pick out perlite. I try to remove as much of the soil and perlite from the root systems of the plants I'm using, gently swishing them in a bowl of warm water. Then the roots are wrapped in long fiber sphagnum moss. This keeps them moist, without having to water the planting and causing possible leakage in a natural garden, or over-watering in a terrarium or dish garden.

Once I have finished the planting of the container, then I'm ready to finish it with pits of wood, rock and moss to make it look more like a natural planting. I sometimes will put a path in the planting using small stones. I have used pieces of slate, glued together with silicon seal, to create a small stone wall, which is great to have a creeping plant hanging over.

I don't keep my plantings growing; they are usually planted right before show and then disassembled after the show, so there isn't a problem with using plants that might have different watering requirements. You do have to keep in mind that plants that have higher humidity requirements should only be used in a terrarium. All your containers should be clean, and the color of the container should be neutral so it doesn't draw the eye away from your planting. As a judge, there is nothing worse than having to deduct points from a wonderful planting with a great landscape, when either the glass is dirty or cloudy, or the dish is an outrageous color.

I hope that this helps you and that you have success in the planting of your next container garden.





# AVSA BOOSTER FUND

Shirley Berger • 2822 S. Mainsail Dr. • Avon Park, FL 33525-6032  
Contributions: September 1 - October 31, 2012



## Geneva

Central Jersey African Violet Society,  
Milltown, NJ  
*Club has disbanded*  
Mary A Boland, Alexandria, VA  
*Life member donation*  
Early Bird Violet Club, Birmingham,  
AL  
Mrs Hiroko Endo  
Koh-to-ku, Tokyo, Japan  
*Life member donation*  
R. F. Haniman, Gloucester, ON, Canada  
*Life member donation*  
Terry Klemesrud, Champlin, MN  
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Stanley Wai Kong Ko  
Shatin, NT, Hong Kong, China  
*Life member donation*  
Ken-ichi Numachi, Shimizu,  
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*Life member donation*  
Palmetto African Violet Society,  
Saluda, SC  
*Funds left after club ended  
membership*  
Karen Plourde, Palos Verdes  
Peninsula, CA  
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Aloha Rhodes, Manchaca, TX  
*Life member donation*  
Charles B. Swartwood, Elmira, NY  
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Kathleen Tompkins,  
Mount Pleasant, TX  
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Mrs Kahoru Yamamoto, Tokyo, Japan  
*Life member donation*



## Multicolor

Jeri Anderson, Tucson, AZ  
Charles V. Applegate, Perrysville, OH  
*Life Member donation*  
Kathy Bell, Tucson, AZ  
Kyle Coleman, Fort Worth, TX  
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Janice K. Tyler, Decorah, IA  
*Life member donation*  
Ronald H Whitchurch, Clearwater, FL  
*Life member donation*  
*In memory of Julianne Canfield*



## Two-tone

Rose Akins, Farmington, NM  
*Life member donation*  
Mrs. Elizabeth P. Behnke, Newark, DE  
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Carol J. Brown, Godfrey, IL  
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Anna Beth Butler, Lubbock, TX  
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Sherry Whitmer, Muldrow, OK  
*Life member donation*



## Thumbprint

William E. Blankenstein  
Wilmington, DE  
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Susan Carter, Tulsa, OK  
Nancy Frost, Ocala, FL  
Leslie Mann, Jacksonville, FL  
Esther E. Mason, Albany, NY  
*Life member donation*  
Gail Podany, Minnetonka, MN  
Connie Resseguie, Bakersfield, CA  
Sandra Skalski, Mullica Hill, NJ  
Mrs. William D. Stone, Aurora, CO  
*Life member donation*  
Donald Taliman, Utica, NY  
Neville W. Ward, Great Falls, VA  
Pam West, Irving, TX

**Website Improvement**  
**Fund: \$300.00**  
**Total Contributions: \$4571.49**

# Thrips Last Stand

By: Kathy Brewster  
From Her CD: *Thrips Last Stand*

Does this title sound somewhat familiar? I chose it based on some of the parallels of Custer's final defeat. Most of us know it as "Custer's Last Stand." General Custer and his flamboyant and unconventional war tactics struck fear in the hearts of those who encountered him. This is much like the terror that strikes the grower's heart, especially those of us who grow to show in judged competitions.

The slender, tiny insects called thrips are known to transmit over twenty plant-infecting viruses! They truly are a grower's nightmare.



*Wild Irish Rose*



*Willodene*

For the last decade, I've stumbled upon a few cutting edge ideas that could enhance your growing experience and eradicate some bug problems. Who would have ever thought that you could bathe your entire violet with bleach and dish liquid for stunning and fragrant results?

I spoke of my procedure at various African violet conventions. I was given a challenge at the 2011 Texas State Convention: "grow some violets using this method." The spring show for the First Austin African Violet Society showcased 16 "bleach babies" (as I call them) that won blue ribbons. A cup of bleach with dish liquid in a gallon of water didn't harm the violet and resulted in bug free, floriferous blue ribbon winners. I detail my ten years of experimenting in my new CD release, "Thrips Last Stand." Wacky ideas can really work.

Dealing with reoccurring bug problems can be disheartening, but finding a cure is exhilarating and an idea worth sharing. If thrips are a problem for you, try this simple solution and you'll agree that your plant room can be free of all bugs, and as for thrips and the threat they bring, it will be their *last stand*.

(Editor's Note: See Kathy's ad on page 61.)



## ***Arctic Frost***

*Exhibited by:*

*Donna Brining*

*Hybridized by:*

*S. Sorano*

*Standard*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## ***Calico Queen***

*Exhibited by:*

*Marie Burns*

*Hybridized by:*

*P. Sorano/L. Lyon*

*Greenhouses*

*Standard*



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

# A VISIT WITH SONJA

By Sonja Holm

Working with the African violets is much like working on a building. If you want a sound and sturdy structure, a good foundation is an absolute MUST!

If you want healthy, robust plant, a good root system is also a MUST!

When I put leaves down to make babies, I use Seaweed Extract when watering them, so they grow good root systems. It is a delight to set out the babies with healthy roots and watch the plants grow. I like to water the babies with the Seaweed Extract for about a month before switching them over to regular plant food.

When repotting into larger pots, using Marathon will eliminate the problem of Mealy bugs. However, the mealybugs will still find the baby plants. I have found the best solution for eradicating mealybugs is about a half-teaspoon of Ivory liquid dish detergent to approximately one cup of water. The mealybugs literally disintegrate when they are sprayed with the Ivory solution. If your lights are on timers and you are up early

when the lights come on, you can see the tiny white mealybugs flying lazily up to the lights. It is my thinking that these tiny mealybugs are the ones to spread the bugs to other plants, and the best time to get the tiny mealybugs when flying is when they wake up in the morning.

I have also found that some plants are very sensitive to where they are placed. I have two varieties that do best on the lowest shelf where it is cooler, while some prefer top or center shelves.

African violets respond to their atmosphere. Healthy, happy plants reward us with so much beauty and joy.

## Editor's Note:

*Sonja also shared with me a local newspaper article announcing an open house she hosted in November, to offer the public a chance to purchase some of her young African violets. She reported that the response was very good, with many of her new violet friends wanting to know when she would host another event. Probably next spring, she told them.*

## Membership Application

Application for Membership Recommended by \_\_\_\_\_ Mem. # \_\_\_\_\_

The African Violet Society of America, Inc.

2375 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702

[www.avsa.org](http://www.avsa.org)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Membership runs one year from date paid and includes 6 issues of the AFRICAN VIOLET Magazine.

- ☐ Individual Membership USA (\$30.00)  
☐ Associate Member USA (\$15.00-no magazine)  
(Must reside at same address as a person having any other Class of membership)  
☐ International Individual, Canada (\$35.00)  
☐ International Associate, Canada (\$17.50)  
☐ International Individual, other than Canada (\$40.00)  
☐ International Associate, other than Canada (\$20.00)  
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☐ Commercial Canada (\$65.00)  
☐ Commercial International, other than Canada (\$70.00)  
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☐ Library (\$30.00)  
☐ Life Member USA (\$1,000.00)  
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# Humidity and Pesky Fungus

By Joyce & Kent Stork • From their book: *You CAN Grow African Violets*

Since many of the constant water systems involve open sources of water, there is a natural increase in the level of the humidity around the plants. This humidity can be a real positive, encouraging flower bud development and extending the life of blossoms. But it can also be a real problem because of fungus disease. Many fungi need high humidity to thrive. Mildew and botrytis, two very damaging fungi that attack African violets, can be almost uncontrollable if humidity levels reach 80%. That level of humidity may also damage your home or growing area structurally, especially if you live in an area with cold seasons.

There are several solutions. One is to limit the amount of open water that can evaporate. Some growers cover trays with plastic or use plastic-coated matting that has many tiny holes to allow seepage without evaporation. Using individual water reservoirs for each plant in sealed containers also reduces humidity. Ventilation systems can also help.

Another solution is to use matting and allow it to go dry before rewetting. We have used this method without any noticeable loss in the quality of plant growth. A side benefit has been a decrease in the population of pesky fungus gnats and shore flies.

## Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

Janet Riemer • 256 Pennington-Harbourton Rd. • Pennington, NJ 08534  
September 1, 2012 – October 30, 2012 • Total this period: \$535.00



### Geneva

Central Jersey African Violet Society  
*Club disbanded*



### Multicolor

Jen Anderson  
Eunice Curry  
*1/2 life member donation*



### Two-tone

African Violet Society of Southern California  
*In memory of Carroll McCarroll*  
African Violet Society of Southern California  
*In memory of Marge Lillquist*  
Sherry Whitmer

## AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

Susan Hapner - *Chairman* • 35 Ridge Point Dr. • Chesterfield, MO 63017  
1 August 2012 to 30 November • Total \$236.00



### Thumbprint

Pam West  
Ruby Cox  
Wilma Wolverton  
Nancy Frost  
Stephanie Zich  
Metropolitan St. Louis AVC  
*In lieu of judging fee for*  
*Randy Deutsch*  
Gail Podany

Connie Resseguie  
Sheila Jones  
Susan Carter  
Lorraine Harrison  
Donna Williams  
Ralph Mancusi



### Two-tone

AVC of Greater Kansas City

Tidewater AVS

*In memory of Mr. John Early*  
Barbara Taswell-Miller  
Cinti AVS  
*In memory of Kenny*  
*Lehman, husband of Gayle*  
*Lehman*  
Cinti AVS  
*In memory of Sandy*  
*McIntosh's mother*



# Snowflake Update

By Ronn Nadeau

In May of 2011 I got an e-mail from Mr. Ben Haning of Lucas, TX, describing a seedling he had grown from African violet seeds (Miniature selection) purchased from our company, NadeauAfricanVioletSeeds.com. He followed this up with pictures that I found absolutely fascinating, and I asked for permission to write an article about his find. The article appeared in the July/August, 2011, issue of this Magazine. Judging from the emails I received about it, the picture caught the interest of many African violet growers.



*Snowflake Plant*

Now, sadly, I must report that Snowflake was too good to be true, as if having melted during an approach of spring. In a recent email, Mr. Haning reports that he still has the original seedling plus several 1st generation plantlets from it. He says that after two bloom cycles in

which the snowflake trait showed, the original seedling gradually produced fewer blooms with the trait, and then none. Also, plantlets from the original seedling showed only regular single star-shaped blooms. He tried to cross some of the plantlets to each other, but didn't get any seed pods.



*Snowflake Blossom*

After thirty-six years of selling African violet seeds to large seed companies as well as to individual hobbyists, my wife, Katsuko, and I continue to offer them in three selections, Standard, Miniature, and Trailer. We have customers the world over, including some from countries we had never even heard of! We are rewarded by the notes of satisfaction received from customers who have enjoyed our service and seeds, and by interesting stories, as the one about the Snowflake!

**"And the winners are ..."** 434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

By Mary J. Corondan

Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

## OHIO STATE AVS, OHIO – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, Buckeye No Nonsense, Mary Craig; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Dear, Jolly Devil, Rob's Heat Wave; Best in Show/Best Standard: Carolina Elegant Affair, **Mary Martin**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Blue Spinner, Ma's Spanish Eyes, Picasso, **Martha Bell**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi



Collection: Rob's Rinky Dink, Jolly Waltz, Jolly Orchid; Best Semiminiature: Frosty Bubbles, Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Debbie McInnis**. Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet, **Julie Jones**. Best Trailer: Fancy Trail, **Marge Farrand**. Best Species: *Saint-paulia* 5b clone *confusa*, **Pat Gibson**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina linearifolia*, **Linda Neumann**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Mel Grice**.





Photo Credit: Holly Walker

## ***Celina Dark Velvet***

*Exhibited by: Holly Walker*

*Hybridized by: Hortense Pittman*

*Semiminiature*

# Planting by Moon Signs

All tables use Eastern Time. Please calculate the difference between your time zone and Eastern.

## Moon in Aries

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds, pests, etc., and for cultivating.

## Moon in Taurus

Productive and moist, earthy and feminine. Used for planting many crops, particularly potatoes and root crops, and when hardness is important. Also used for lettuce, cabbage, and similar leafy vegetables.

## Moon in Gemini

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds and pests, and for cultivation.

## Moon in Cancer

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. This is the most productive sign; used extensively for planting and irrigation.

## Moon in Leo

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. This is the most barren sign, used only for killing weeds and for cultivation.

## Moon in Virgo

Barren and moist, earthy and feminine. Good for cultivation and destroying weeds and pests.

## Moon in Libra

Semi-fruitful and moist, airy and masculine. Used for planting many crops and producing good pulp growth and roots. A very good sign for flowers and vines. Also used for seeding hay, corn fodder, etc.

## Moon in Scorpio

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Nearly as productive as Cancer; used for the same purposes. Especially good for vine growth and sturdiness.

## Moon in Sagittarius

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for planting onions, seeding hay, and for cultivation.

## Moon in Capricorn

Productive and dry, earthy and feminine. Used for planting potatoes, tubers, etc.

## Moon in Aquarius

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for cultivation and destroying noxious growths, weeds, and pests.

## Moon in Pisces

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Used along with Cancer and Scorpio, especially good for root growth.

## January Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase
1 Tue 12:55 pm	Virgo	Earth	Barren	3rd
2 Wed	Virgo	Earth	Barren	3rd
3 Thu 8:11 pm	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	3rd
4 Fri	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	4th 10:58 pm
5 Sat	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	4th
6 Sun 1:09 am	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	4th
7 Mon	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	4th
8 Tue 3:28 am	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	4th
9 Wed	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	4th
10 Thu 3:54 am	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th
11 Fri	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	New 2:44 pm
12 Sat 4:01 am	Aquarius	Air	Barren	1st
13 Sun	Aquarius	Air	Barren	1st
14 Mon 5:49 am	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	1st
15 Tue	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	1st
16 Wed 11:07 am	Aries	Fire	Barren	1st
17 Thu	Aries	Fire	Barren	1st
18 Fri 8:36 pm	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd 6:45 pm
19 Sat	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd
20 Sun	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd
21 Mon 9:04 am	Gemini	Air	Barren	2nd
22 Tue	Gemini	Air	Barren	2nd
23 Wed 10:00 pm	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	2nd
24 Thu	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	2nd
25 Fri	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	2nd
26 Sat 9:20 am	Leo	Fire	Barren	Full 11:38 pm
27 Sun	Leo	Fire	Barren	3rd
28 Mon 6:27 pm	Virgo	Earth	Barren	3rd
29 Tue	Virgo	Earth	Barren	3rd
30 Wed	Virgo	Earth	Barren	3rd
31 Thu 1:36 am	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	3rd

## February Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase
1 Fri	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	3rd
2 Sat 7:02 am	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	3rd
3 Sun	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	4th 8:56 am
4 Mon 10:45 am	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	4th
5 Tue	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	4th
6 Wed 12:55 pm	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th
7 Thu	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th
8 Fri 2:16 pm	Aquarius	Air	Barren	4th
9 Sat	Aquarius	Air	Barren	4th
10 Sub 4:20 pm	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	New 2:20 am
11 Mon	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	1st
12 Tue 8:51 pm	Aries	Fire	Barren	1st
13 Wed	Aries	Fire	Barren	1st
14 Thu	Aries	Fire	Barren	1st
15 Fri 5:08 am	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	1st
16 Sat	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	1st
17 Sun 4:50 pm	Gemini	Air	Barren	2nd 3:31 pm
18 Mon	Gemini	Air	Barren	2nd
19 Tue	Gemini	Air	Barren	2nd
20 Wed 5:45 am	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	2nd
21 Thu	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	2nd
22 Fri 5:12 pm	Leo	Fire	Barren	2nd
23 Sat	Leo	Fire	Barren	2nd
24 Sun	Leo	Fire	Barren	2nd
25 Mon 1:52 am	Virgo	Earth	Barren	Full 3:26 pm
26 Tue	Virgo	Earth	Barren	3rd
27 Wed 8:02 am	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	3rd
28 Thu	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	3rd

## Notice about Planting by Moon Signs

After many, many years of providing the *Planting by Moon Signs* for our members, this is the last time the planting guide will be presented in the AVM.

The Moon Sign information is readily available in Llewellyn's Moon Sign Book, which is published annually.

The book can be found in most chain book-

stores or ordered directly through the Llewellyn publishing company. Clubs could also purchase the book and offer the information to any members who are interested. (\$10.99 US, \$12.50 Canada)

To order online: [www.llewellyn.com](http://www.llewellyn.com)

By phone in the US: (877) 639-9753

By phone in Canada: (866) 639-9753

### AVSA Office Holiday Closings

Please note that the AVSA Office will be closed:

Christmas week: Dec. 24 - 27

New Year's Eve and Day: Dec. 31st and Jan. 1, 2013

Jenny, Amy, and Ruth wish you all the happiest of holidays and the very best the New Year can bring!



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Heinz's Desert Song*

*Exhibited by: Donna Brining*

*Hybridized by: H. Dornbusch*

*Standard*

# Utilizing Old Copies of the *African Violet Magazine*

By Beverlee Nelson  
Burbank African Violet Club

Below is a picture of some of the badges I make for my club, the Burbank AVS.

I purchase thin wooden disks from a local craft shop. I remove labels, lightly sand with fine sand paper, and then spray with two coats of Krylon "dries in 12 min-

utes" enamel paint. I search through old *African Violet Magazines*, looking for appropriate colored violets, trying to match them with what I know the recipient likes. I attach the flowers with white glue, then add the club's name and member's



*Badges*

name with a fine-point Sharpie pen. The next day, when all is set and dry, I spray a couple of coats of Rust-Oleum Crystal Clear Enamel for a protective finish. When dry, I attach a pin to the back with super glue, (making sure the opening is at

the outside of the badge for more easy pinning to clothes) and add the name of the violet and date made. The members once again, enjoy the recycled old magazine pictures!



Photo Credit: Paula Bal

## *Frozen in Time*

*Exhibited by:*

*Paula Bal*

*Hybridized by:*

*Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano*



# 2013 AVSA Board Nominees



## **John Carter for President**

John Carter was born and grew up in Colorado before moving to Oklahoma where he met and married his wife Judy. They have been married 38 years. John graduated from Colorado State University with

a degree in business specializing in accounting and economics. He worked for Amoco Corporation and various subsidiaries as a computer systems analyst for over 33 years in both Tulsa and Houston.

John became Judy's helper in the early 80's after he bought her an African violet, and she joined the African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa. John assisted with shows and programs for over 20 years before he "officially" joined in the activity. He has since served as President, Treasurer, and various show committees. In 2000 John became a student judge and is now a Senior Judge. He also served as the Missouri Valley African Violet Council Newsletter Editor for nine years.

In 1997 John was asked to review the computing needs of the AVSA office and insure that everything was Y2 compliant. John developed a proposal, which was approved by the Executive Committee, and he purchased the computers and software required to oversee the migration to the new system. He still serves as chairman of the Technology Committee.

John began helping with national conventions at the 1999 convention in Houston. He then moved to Oklahoma and became part of the Missouri Valley African Violet Council and assisted with the 2000 AVSA convention in Omaha. John has helped in some capacity at every convention since that time and has served two terms as an AVSA Director. John has also been a member of the Convention & Society Awards, Shows & Judges, Policies & Procedures, and the Internet committees. In 1999 and 2009 John was recognized with a one year honorary membership award and in 2006 with a continuing service

award. John has served the past two years as First Vice President and was the chairman of the 2008 AVSA Convention held in Tulsa, Oklahoma. John is a Life member of AVSA and a member and student judge in the Gesneriad Society.

John serves as Treasurer at his church where he is responsible for the payroll and getting bills paid on time. John's other interests are in woodworking and growing roses. John is a Consulting Rosarian and has held various offices in the Tulsa Rose Society. He is currently the webmaster and editor of their newsletter.



## **Winston J. Goretsky for 1st Vice President**

Winston J. Goretsky is a native of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. He has been a member of AVSA since 1982 and is a Life Member, Judge's Teacher, and Master Judge. He has

served on the AVSA Shows & Judges Committee, Publications Committee, Internet Committee, and is currently serving AVSA as 2nd Vice President. He was presented with the Mable and Glen Hudson Memorial Award for Excellence in Affiliate Leadership in 2011.

He is a Life Member of the AVS of Canada, serving as Director, President, and currently as Treasurer. He is also a Life Member of the Gesneriad Society and recently became a Student Gesneriad Judge.

He is a member of the Stampede City AVS, conducting workshops and giving presentations on a variety of topics. He publishes his local club's Newsletter, serves as the Membership & Publicity Chairman, and is involved with many of the Show Committees. He was Convention Chairman for the AVS of Canada's National Convention & Show, when hosted by his local club.

Winston has been photographing Affiliate and Convention AV Shows in both Canada and the USA for many years. He is the official AVSA Show Photographer for the *African Violet Magazine*, and



his photographs appear in "Chatter," AVS of Canada's publication, horticultural magazines, calendars, and the Gesneriad Society Journal,

His love for African violets began as a youth and was encouraged by his grandmother. He has been growing African violets and Gesneriads since 1974, encouraging others by sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm.

Winston has been a computer professional for over twenty-five years and is a Systems Specialist within the oil and gas sector. He and Laurel have two children: Emily (13) and Carter (11). The entire family shares an enthusiasm for plant life.



**Richard Nicholas for  
2nd Vice President**

AVSA has been a source of fun, friends, and support for my hobby for many years. It has been a pleasure to give back as a Vice President. In my "real" life, I serve as Vice

President for Student Life at Texas Woman's University – a three campus university of over 15,000 students.

After our first violet arrived in 1971, more and more began to arrive. I began growing seriously a few years later. My wife, Anne, joined me as a grower shortly thereafter. We have been growing together for over twenty years. Our shelves are loaded with nearly 500 small ones, standards, trailers, streps, and the "cousins." We have shown at local, state, and national shows. I added hybridizing to my addiction, releasing five standards as the beginning of the Lonestar series. I hope to add to the series.

We belong to the First AVS of Denton, TX and have both served as officers of the club and of the Lone Star African Violet Council. Working with AVSA, I have served on the Awards, Research, Scholarship, Library, Tinari Fund Advancement, and website committees and one term as an AVSA director. I look forward to assisting to the best of my ability as we work together to build a future for AVSA.



**Sue Ramser for  
3rd Vice President**

Sue Ramser, of Wichita Falls, Texas, has been a member of the First African Violet Society of Wichita Falls for forty one years. She has served as show chairman,

Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, and President nine times.

As member of the Lone Star African Violet Council, Sue has served as newsletter editor twice, Parliamentarian, Secretary, Vice President, and President. She is also active in the North Texas African Violet Judges Council, having served as Corresponding Secretary, Secretary, Vice President, and President twice.

Sue has served as a member of the AVSA classification committee, aide to the president for the 1988 AVSA Convention in Dallas, vice chairman of the AVSA Affiliate Committee, elected director, AVSA Sales and Promotion Table Volunteer Coordinator, Secretary of the Shows and Judges Committee, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Policies and Procedures Committee, Treasurer, and Secretary. Sue is an AVSA Honorary Life Member, AVSA Life Member, Master Judge, Teacher, and in 1993 compiled "Teaching Tools" and with Barbara Pershing is currently working on its revision. Sue's past service for AVSA affords her the experience to work for the good of AVSA in the future.

Sue is a graduate of the University of North Texas, Denton, Texas with a Bachelor of Business Administration. Her husband, Charles, is a Professor Emeritus of Management at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls. They have four children and three grandchildren. Sue's other interests include sewing and knitting.



### **Edna Rourke for Treasurer**

Edna Rourke is President of the Naugatonic African Violet Society, Past President, and current Treasurer of the Nutmeg State AVS, member of the Tri-State Judges Council, and

member of Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society. She served the AVSA Board of Directors twice and presently is serving as Treasurer of AVSA. Edna has been the Chairman of the AVSA Annual Luncheon Auction for the last thirteen years.

Edna currently is an administrative assistant for the Shelton Connecticut Board of Education. She and husband Albert are enthusiastic supporters of AVSA and are very busy at the AVSA conventions. They have two grown sons, James and Thomas, and are blessed to have a wonderful daughter-in-law, Laurel. Edna enjoys promoting African violets and AVSA and looks forward to continuing her service to AVSA.

**Secretary to be announced in the March-April 2013 issue**



### **Bob Clark for Director**

I was first introduced to African violets at the age of 9 or 10 by Mrs. Ada Hale, my grandmother's best friend, in Greenfield, MA. She generously shared with me leaves of 'Ballet Anna' and 'Blue Boy'

and instructed me how to put them down and grow the plants. I was "hooked."

In college, I minored in Botany and collected and processed several hundred specimens to add to the college herbarium. I learned of organized local clubs of African violet enthusiasts in 1989, when I joined the Quannapowitt AVC, Bay State AVS, and of course, the AVSA.

I was quickly drafted to help Ruth Warren with the upcoming national convention in Boston the following year. All the work with the committee could not prepare me for the overwhelming glimpse at my first show room. WOW! I became a

Judge, and to become a better judge, joined the AGGS and learned how to grow and judge other gesneriads. I also joined other local and state groups. I have a keen interest in participating and promoting design entries, and growing and exhibiting species *Saintpaulia* at shows.

During my previous term on the Board of Directors, I volunteered to be on the Convention Show Awards Committee and the Website Committee, both of which I still serve on, and the Convention Survey Committee.

Lynne Wilson also has asked and I am now a part of the Publications Committee. I am happy to be considered again for the Board of Directors and will help promote our plants, our clubs, our members, and help to strengthen the bonds with other African violet and Gesneriad Societies.



### **Susan K. Hill for Director**

I am very honored to be nominated as an AVSA Director. The violet world began for me when I was invited by a neighbor to go to an African Violet Show in Syracuse, New York, in the spring of 1976. I

purchased a few violets and was invited to attend an information meeting and was hooked.

I joined AVSA, became a Judge, and joined the Central New York Judge's Council. I moved to Oklahoma in 1986 and joined the Greater Tulsa AVS. Upon moving to Austin, Texas, in 2000, I became a member of First Austin AVS.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the friends I have made over the years at AVSA Conventions and State shows. I am a member of AVSA, Lonestar African Violet Society, and the Gesneriad Society. I recently passed my first Senior Judge's test. I am currently the Show Chair for the AVSA 2013 Convention in Austin, Texas.

After moving to Kansas in June 2012, I joined the Missouri Valley African Violet Council and the Greater Tulsa AVS. I have a Master's Degree in Reading Education from the University of Central Oklahoma and enjoy reading, traveling, and working in my church.



### **Lorna Russell for Director**

I am honored to be nominated for a position as an AVSA Director. A resident of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, I have been an enthusiastic member of the Ottawa AVS for the past seventeen years.

My passion for growing African violets went to a whole new level after our local club hosted the 2006 AVS of Canada's National Convention and Show.

During my time with the Ottawa AVS, I have held the positions of president, vice president, treasurer, local show chair for six years, and judges' chair for two years. I am a member and Director of the AVS Canada, member of AVSA, New York AVS, Ontario Judges' Council, Gesneriad Society, and a Senior Judge.

As the Canadian Assistant Show chair for the 2012 Detroit AVSA/AVSC Convention and Show, use of the Internet proved to be very useful in helping with the organization of the conference.

We have been blessed with a daughter, son, six grandchildren, and one great grandchild. When I am not attending my plants, I enjoy keeping up with their busy lives and cheering them on!

The other wonderful and beautiful thing about the African violet world are the relationships that have developed with so many wonderful and like-minded growers.



### **Joan Santino for Director**

A member of AVSA for over 15 years, Joan has been a member of the AVS of Springfield, Delaware County, PA. During those years. She held offices of President, Vice President, Corresponding and

Recording Secretary, as well as AVSA Representative.

Joan is also a member of the TriState (NJ, NY, & PA) African Violet Council.

On a national level, Joan has exhibited and judged at nine conventions and served as Local Convention Vice-Chairman of the 2011 Cherry Hill Convention. She was presented an Honorary One-Year AVSA Membership in 2012.

A long-time member and affiliate Director of the Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society (MAAVS), she has exhibited and judged their shows and helped with Ways & Means. Joan currently serves MAAVS as its President.

It is both an honor and privilege to be nominated to serve our national organization as an AVSA Director, enabling her to continue her cheer-leading for this wonderful society.

Previously Secretary to board chairman of a textile equipment manufacturer until the birth of her only child, Joan returned to the office scene in 1989 and serves as Administrative Assistant at her place of worship. She enjoys sharing the joy of growing, showing, and judging America's favorite houseplant to anyone who will listen.





*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

***Sport of Yukako***  
*Exhibited by: Debbie McInnes*



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Gloxinia erinoides 'Red Satin'*

*Exhibited by:*

*Kevin W. Degner*

## Registration Report

*By Joe Bruns*

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

*Email: jbruns@qwip.net*

A name reservation costs \$1.00 (\$5.00 for non-members) for each plant, and is valid for two years, after which time it may be extended two years for an additional \$1.00 (\$5.00 for non-members). Registration of the plant is \$5.00 (\$25.00 for non-members) unless completed within the reservation period, in which case the balance is \$4.00 (\$20.00 for non-members).



### **Hortense Pittman – Celina, TX**

**'Me Me Emily'** (10560) 08/06/2012 (H. Pittman)  
Semidouble burgundy-red pansy. Dark green, plain, quilted. **Semiminiature**

**'Petite Blarney'** (10561) 08/06/2012 (H. Pittman)  
Double light pink/variable green-white edge. Medium green, girl foliage. **Miniature**

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### **Stanley Ko – Shatin, NT, Hong Kong**

**'Ko's Double Temptation'** (10562) 08/24/2012  
(S. Ko) Semidouble chimera pink star/streaked mauve stripe, mauve band, white edge. Medium

green, quilted. **Standard**

**'Ko's Lil Affection'** (10563)  
08/24/2012 (S. Ko) Double white pansy/fuchsia eye. Medium green, plain.

**Semiminiature**

**'Ko's Love Blossoms'** (10564)  
08/24/2012 (S. Ko) Semidouble chimera white frilled pansy/blue-fantasied lavender

stripe, green edge. **Variegated** medium green and white, ruffled. **Standard**

**'Ko's Mykonos Romance'** (10565) 08/24/2012  
(S. Ko) Semidouble chimera white frilled pansy/blue stripe. **Variegated** medium green and white, glossy, ruffled. **Standard**

**'Ko's Summer Berries'** (10566) 08/24/2012  
(S. Ko) Single chimera mauve sticktite pansy/light blue stripe, blue fantasy, dark raspberry band. Medium green, plain. **Standard**

**'Ko's Watercolor Splashes'** (10567)  
08/24/2012 (S. Ko) Single chimera lavender-pink fluted sticktite star/lavender stripe, white eye, blue fantasy. Medium green, plain. **Standard**



# MAKE FERTILIZER YOUR FRIEND

Claire O'Shea  
Australia

It is astounding how many people complain that their African violets don't flower and, upon being asked whether they feed their plants, reply, 'Well, I water them!' They are dumbfounded. It never occurred to them to feed their plants as well!

I guess this comes about because the plants outside in our garden seem to do all right with the odd sprinkling of water from time to time. Our garden soil may contain naturally occurring elements and fertilizers, but we grow our African violets in a soilless, sterile potting mix so these are missing or are washed away by constant watering. Our plants will eventually starve.

Fertilization can be a complex scientific subject and difficult to understand. Some growers like to make up their own recipes and go into the area in depth. I am neither a commercial grower nor have the scientific background to confidently do this. I am a hobby grower who hopes to grow healthy, flowering plants, maybe win a few ribbons in the Annual Show, have fun propagating, and perhaps sell a few spares along the way. I don't have time to waste and find that those fertilizers commercially available do their job just fine.

Pick up just about any packet of fertilizer and you will notice on the back a list of ingredients and a bunch of numbers. I'm not going to confuse you. When people start to quote numbers, I waft off. The numbers merely relate to the percentage of that element contained in that particular fertilizer. Instead, let's look at what the particular elements do and when you might need more of one or another.

Remember back in high school science lessons you had to learn about the Periodic Table of Elements and the Chemical Symbols?

The three main elements contained in most fertilizers are expressed as N.P.K. - nitrogen (chemical symbol 'N'), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K). These are sometimes listed in bold

print. Most fertilizers contain all three and are termed 'Complete Fertilizers.'

Plants need plenty of nitrogen (N) to form proteins and enzymes for plant cells to live and reproduce, and it is the necessary part of the green pigment chlorophyll. Put simply, it is essential to good stem and leaf growth. Deficiency causes stunted growth and pale green/yellow leaves sometimes showing a reddish tint.

Phosphorus (P) forms part of the nucleoproteins in plant cells, and therefore is important in growing tissue where cells are actively dividing. Phosphorus promotes development of seedlings, root growth, flowering, and the formation of fruits and seeds. Deficiency is displayed by poor root development, stunted growth, and often a purplish discoloration of leaves.

Potassium (K) promotes chlorophyll formation and plays an important part in the strength of cells and the movement of water in plants. Potassium assists with disease resistance and improved quality of flowers, fruits, and seeds. Deficiency leads to weak stems, floppy (particularly in older) leaves with yellow/brown tips, and scorched margins.

Besides these three essential ingredients, fertilizers also usually include 'Secondary Elements' namely, calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg) and sulfur (S), and 'Trace Elements,' iron (Fe) Manganese (Mn), Copper (Cu), zinc (Zn), boron (B), and molybdenum (Mo). Our plants need all of these to function and although some are required in tiny amounts, they are, nevertheless, necessary for survival.

Now to look at those confusing numbers. The numbers shown tell you the percentage of the element present in the particular fertilizer. A higher number of, say, nitrogen, than phosphorus means that the particular fertilizer is geared towards encouraging the growth of leaves and stems rather than inducing flowering, and vice-versa. So, you might want to use a fertilizer with



a higher nitrogen count on your baby plants, or those that are struggling to get going, to encourage quickened growth. You might then switch to a balanced N.P.K. or even a higher potassium count to bring your plant to maturity and then a higher phosphorus count (a 'bloom booster' or one for 'flowering plants') to promote and increase the production of flowers or seeds.

Just as humans need a balanced diet, it is unwise to keep your plants on a high nitrogen or high phosphorus diet for an overly long time. Too much nitrogen will cause the plant to grow soft and floppy, and it likely will not flower; too much phosphorus and the plant will be exhausted by constant flower production.

I would here counsel caution with fertilizer use. We like to think of them as food but should really consider them as medicines. Too much, or imbalance, will cause more problems than too little. Always use the recommended dose and, if in doubt, use a weakened dose. Baby plants, minis and semi-minis, and plants weakened by disease or 'major surgery' (i.e. with an immature, smaller, or reduced root system) will favor a diluted dose. You can always increase the strength but cannot undo the damage caused by too much fertilizer!

Fertilizer burn is exhibited by a 'burnt' look to the center of the plant, orange-colored crystalization on the leaves, or a crust of fertilizer salts around the rim of the pot. It is a good idea to leach the pot with plain water every six weeks, to flush out the buildup, and repot regularly. Never fertilize a dry plant! You will burn the roots. Rehydrate with plain water, leave for a day or two, and then fertilize.

Growth slows in warmer weather, and if it is particularly hot, it is wise to use a diluted formula

during these times. I wick-water all of my plants so if I am going to be on holiday for a week or more, I replace all fertilized water in my reservoirs with plain water, and the plants seem to do fine.

Because variegated plants contain less chlorophyll in their leaves, their growth is much slower. You might want to feed them a higher nitrogen fertilizer to start with to give their growth a boost. They will lose some of their variegation. Once your plant has become established, replace the higher nitrogen fertilizer with a lower one to regain the variegation.

What about organic fertilizers? Our soilless mixes, unfortunately, do not contain the microbes that are necessary to break the organic matter down into the elements your plant can use, so they may not be of huge benefit in the growing of African violets.

Ask your fellow growers to see what they use and recommend. However, don't run out and change all of your plants over to the new nutrient immediately. I doubt that there ever will be a 'wonder fertilizer.' Remember that our violets also rely on light, warmth, water, and potting mix to grow, and other growers' conditions are unlikely to mirror your own. By all means, try a new solution, but on a few 'expendable' plants to start with!

Also question whether your conditions could be improved. Of course, it isn't a bad idea to feed your plants a different fertilizer from time to time, even alternating them when you feed. Just establish which ones are successful for you first.

From the *Newsletter* of the  
Early Morn African Violet Group, Inc.



# *Petrocosmea*: The Perfect Rosette

By Sayeh D. Beheshti

There was a fantastic turnout at the March 11, 2012 meeting of the Toronto Gesneriad Society as members came to hear another animated presentation by Paul Kroll, this time on *petrocosmeas*.

Once in a while, I will stray from the tight and narrow path of only growing African violets under my light stands and sneak in a gesneriad, but only if I really get interested and something really catches my eye. I must confess that these strays have become more frequent ever since I visited Paul Kroll's house and saw his amazing plant room and collection. Once you hear the passion with which he speaks about gesneriads, you too will succumb to the temptation and begin contemplating adding a few "other" things to your violet collection. I knew that I couldn't miss the opportunity to hear him speak about those adorable *Petrocosmea*.

*Petrocosmea* have been around for a long time. They were rediscovered and came to us as an "old-world gesneriad" from China, where they grow on limestone rocks. There are probably twenty-eight or more species now known. Recently, a member went to China and saw someone selling plants that were new to him at a market. He brought back leaves and discovered that they were ten new species, closely related to the *P. sericea* and HT 2 group and are now just being introduced.

Up to a few years ago, the only *Petrocosmea* hybrid we knew was *P. 'Momo'*, and then *P. 'Asa Blue'* emerged. We now have the Keystone vari-

eties, hybridized by Tim Tuttle. Tim is from Pennsylvania, also known as the Keystone state, thus the name of the Keystone series.

Paul was honored that Tim named one (*P. 'Paul Kroll'*) after him, and others in his series include: Keystone's 'Slippery Rock', 'Blue Jay', 'Falling Waters', 'Angora', 'Little Rascal', 'Barn Swallow', 'Belmont' (named after the high school Tim attended), 'Brilliant', and he's got more babies coming!

The world of *petrocosmeas* is not without its own drama. Since we now have the option and luxury of DNA analysis, the *rosettifolia* group has now been renamed as *P. cryptica*, leading some to thinking that maybe the botanists have too much time on their hands and are finding out that plants belong to other groups than originally thought. In the meantime, we can continue



*Speaker Paul Kroll*

showing as *rosettifolia*.

"To give a soil recipe to Canadian growers who are sworn to the Ernie Fisher soil Formula is sort of a sacrilege", joked Paul, but he admitted that he has discovered that by slightly changing his soil mix, and adding more lime, it has helped his plants. Some plants like more lime, some do better with none.

*Petrocosmeas* are probably the shallowest rooted of any gesneriads, so regular depth pots have too much soil that in turn slows down growth. One solution is to put in a couple of handfuls of perlite or gravel at the bottom of your pot. Tim Tuttle uses chicken grit, but even crushed oyster shells can work since both add the lime

that petrocosmeas love so much.

In a quest for having potting alternatives to traditional flowerpots, Paul has begun using food containers that are used for various things like coleslaw. They are available in restaurant supply stores, come in various sizes and depths, and can be purchased in a long sleeve. They are soft enough that you can just use a scissor to make slits for drainage.

There is a new spray paint by Krylon especially formulated for plastics to repaint porch furniture, but it works on containers equally well. It can be used to paint containers with the flat dark green paint that is almost the same color as traditional flower pots. Paul paints a couple and uses them for slip potting the clear containers in which he grows the plants. Technically, it would be best if the clear plastic rims were not showing, but petrocosmeas usually hide them, and judges don't seem to mind.

Petrocosmeas generally do not like their roots disturbed and often sulk after repotting. One guideline on when to repot the plants is when the leaves begin to touch the rim of the pot. Paul recommends mold-potting when changing pot sizes: After removing your plant from the smaller pot, put that smaller pot into the larger pot and fill the space between the two with soil and mold it. When you remove the smaller pot, the remaining hole is just the right size to drop in your *Petrocosmea* without disturbing the roots.

When asked at what stage should one stop repotting, Paul said that he rarely goes beyond a 5" pot. One of the attendees, Bev Williams, noted that as an experiment, she had gotten larger saucers and tried to repot a 5" *P. rosettifolia* into a larger



*A Blooming Petrocosmea*

saucer, but it refused to grow larger and didn't extend its roots out.

Once in a while, the center of a *Petrocosmea* begins to settle, and if left unchecked, the center sinks and the plant begins to grow up rather than to lay flat. To remedy that, you will need to prop it up with more soil added to the center.

### Watering

Wicking is a technique where you run acrylic yarn through a hole in the bottom of a pot, up, into the soil ball. When the plant is placed on a reservoir, the wick dangles into the water, and the plant draws water up as needed. Paul said that he didn't like that technique, but different people do things differently. Wicking depends a lot on the type of soil you use. A plant that is wicked must have a very porous soil. Petrocosmeas rarely recover from being overwatered. They seem to like humidity in the air but not wet soil, so wicking may not be for this genus. Paul grows a lot of container gardens and often includes a *Petrocosmea*, and simply covers the container garden with an inverted plastic bag. The plants thrive, love that extra humidity, and don't seem bothered by droplets of dew on their leaves.

### Propagation

*Petrocosmea* can be propagated by rooting the little "pups," or suckers, that appear in between their leaves, or from leaf cuttings. Paul reminded us all that the first step of propagation is disinfection: wash all leaves you receive, even if they came from your very own mother! Wash them first with a diluted dish washing detergent or handsoap and then rinse.

The leaf stem is called a petiole, and like African violets, you make a 45 degree cut.

Another similarity to African violets is to take a knife and cut the top of the leaf since you don't need a full leaf. I have seen African violet leaves growing out of the pot but not making any plantlets. If you cut the top off, it directs the leaf energy to making babies, not growing.

One of the most important things that make propagation successful is using a medium that is barely damp in a salad container. Paul said that when he first started, he killed off a lot of *Petrocosmea* leaves with damp mixtures. He now uses a propagation mix which uses vermiculite, perlite, charcoal, and milled sphagnum moss.

### Light

*Petrocosmea* do fairly well in low light conditions. Paul keeps his petrocoseas in the bottom shelf of a three-tiered light stand. They stay flat except one, a Chinese species that is an upright grower, although he has tried for three years to get it to grow flat, to no avail.

One of the biggest dilemmas of going to a show is you may have several days before entering a plant, and you won't have adequate lighting during that time. Paul related one case where he had a large *Petrocosmea minor* that was absolutely flat. Within the span of half a day, the leaves started to raise up as they are looking for light. Even though petrocoseas are low-light plants, you really have to be careful.

### Temperature

Ideal temp for petrocoseas can stand from 4-24°C/39-75°F, but they like the cooler temps.

### Grooming

People are very tempted to touch *Petrocosmea*, often wondering if they are real! Several years ago, at a show, Paul saw a lady rubbing the leaves of a *Petrocosmea* and asked her to please not touch it. Three to four days later, all the leaves that she had touched were bruised or were covered with large black spots. It could have been her hand lotion, but generally *Petrocosmea* just don't like to be touched. Never brush their leaves

with *anything*. Although the leaves look very succulent and turgid, they mark very easily. Instead of brushing, you should just blow dust off, touch it with a Kleenex, or use a hairy African violet leaf to brush it. To groom his petrocoseas and remove extra leaves, Paul likes to take them right out of the pot and groom them from the bottom to get them perfectly round.

Paul recalled that his first *Petrocosmea* was growing completely flat and suddenly was covered with funny lumps and bumps. Although he didn't know it at the time, they were buds trying to get out! Buds emerge from underneath the leaves, and sometimes they need a little help to find their way out. Paul knows someone who uses a crochet hook to actually hook the blossom stems and pull them out.

### Ornamental Value of *Petrocosmea*:

As with all other gesneriads, non-blooming *Petrocosmea* can be entered into a show in the ornamental section. We are all very intrigued by the incredible symmetry of the leaves, but not truly every plant is ornamental. Basically, when entering a plant into the ornamental class, you are taking your chances on whether or not the judges think it belongs there and how ornamental they think it is. It has to have something really different like *P.sericea* which has cupped leaves, leaves that are hairy, or some that are fuzzy. There has to be something "ornamental" about them.

Since hybridization of petrocoseas is rather new, we don't have variegation, a lot of color variation, or something like red fuzz on green leaves. There are really diverse opinions on what constitutes ornamental value since everyone that grows a really nice plant thinks that it is worthy of ornamental value but it hasn't been entirely determined, we haven't reached a bottom line and don't know exactly how it's going to be determined. So the best advice is to take your chances and see if the judges find it worthy.

From *Chatter*,  
Publication of the AVS of Canada



# AVSA Affiliates

By Mel Grice, Affiliates Chairman

2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, OH

Email: <melsgrice@earthlink.net

Please check the AVSA website to see if the information listed there is current for your club. This is a great way to advertise your club and let interested people know that there is a club in their area. On the AVSA website, [www.avsa.org](http://www.avsa.org), click on AFFILIATES and look down the left hand column under Regions to the very bottom where it says "Affiliate Updates."



Click on that and you will see an "Affiliate Information Sheet" that I hope you will copy and send to me with the blanks filled in so that anyone looking for a club can find you. Please be sure to include the complete contact information (including email address) for the AVSA representative in your club so that I may pass along future communications of interest.

Did you know that I am able to send you information and ideas on how to organize and create a new Affiliated Club if there is not one in your area? I can also supply you with a list of

people in your area who are AVSA members as a starting point to build club membership.

Do you have a club show or sale to promote? I can list your event on the AVSA website. Just send me the complete information for your event. Don't forget that our AVM editor, Ruth Rumsey, still needs your event information for it to be listed in the *African Violet Magazine*.

You can address one email to both Ruth and I at the same time. Just remember to look inside the AVM front cover for deadline dates for AVM submissions.

I hope that you will register for the Affiliate Breakfast this year at the AVSA convention in Austin. Come share ideas and success stories with AVSA members from around the country. It would be so wonderful if we could have at least one representative from each AVSA Affiliate in attendance. Together we can grow AVSA!

## The Definition of Chimeras

By Dr. Jeff Smith

A chimera is a plant that has two or more distinct genetic cell lines. The mesophyll tissue (middle of the leaf) is of one genetic type, and the epidermis (skin tissue) is of another. In this particular case, the flower color genes are different between the mesophyll and epidermal tissues, and each tissue produces a different flower color pigment. Since the flowers are made from both mesophyll and epidermis tissues, the flowers will be striped or pin-wheeled as both tissue types show up. The usual chimera has a center strip of one color and outer petal strips of another. The stripes can also carry the fantasy trait and show spots.

Chimeras happen by accident. They cannot be planned or made by hybridization. They are sports/mutations. Since they usually originate from man-hybridized plants, they would be considered a cultivar. Because leaf cuttings are produced from only the epidermal cells, chimeras won't come true from leaf

cuttings (the babies don't get the mesophyll tissue)

You can hybridize on chimeras, but the striped flower trait won't be passed on genetically. I have heard some hybridizers claim, however, that using a chimera as a parent is more likely to produce a few chimera seedlings, but I've seen little proof to this claim. If you cross onto a chimera plant, the seedlings will likely receive their genetic material from the mesophyll tissue layer only and will show the genetic inheritance of that layer or flower color.

Chimeras can be only reproduced from buds, which have both layers of tissue. Suckers can be grown up and rooted (as axillary buds on the leaves) or bloom stalks can be rooted (which have buds at the base of the leafy bracts). These are the only ways to propagate a chimera true to type.

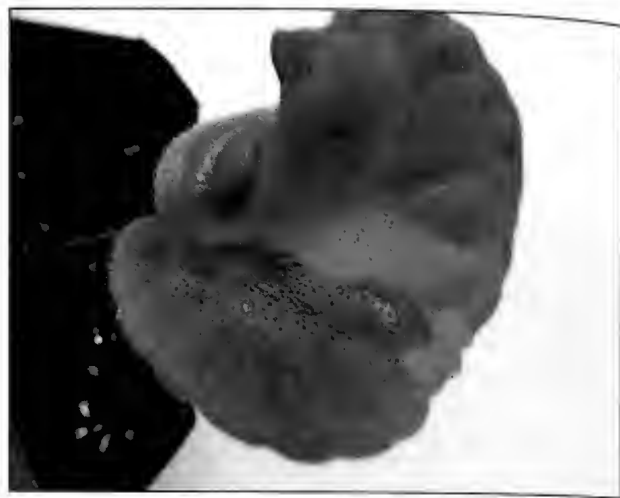
From the *Lone Star African Violet Council Newsletter*



# Where did it come from? How did I get it?

By Pat Hancock

These are questions that many African violet hobbyists are asking these days. How can a plant that is blooming and looks healthy have a life-threatening virus? How could I get INSV (Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus) in my plant room when I am so careful? Some of the project plants that I sold at the Ohio State Show in September were found to have this virus. How did they get it and where did it come from? *I don't know.* Did it look like the pictures of INSV that we have all seen? Absolutely not! No spots on leaves, no missing crowns, none of the symptoms that we have seen in photos.



*Leaf is distorted. Contains various colors of green and prominent darker veins.*

I called all the Ohio clubs and tried to get the word out to everyone who bought a plant. Then I called four people and asked them to get the Agdia tests and check the plants they bought. Two of the four plants tested positive, and two of them tested negative.

I ordered test strips and began testing. Plants that I had taken to shows in the spring tested positive. They didn't look sick, but they had a lot of pink in the crown leaves. They were variegated green and cream – no pink in the outside leaves. I have since learned that this funny pink color in the crown or on the underside of solid green foliage is a very early sign of the virus. I believe it may be six months or longer before the plant looks really sick.

Did I have an infestation of thrips? Not as far as I could see. It is very hard to completely avoid thrips if we go to shows. I have always put my plants in turkey bags for several months after a show – but *maybe* this is not enough! I keep yellow and blue sticky traps on every shelf. My plant room is not part of my house so I am able to use sprays that could not be used in the house. What more can we do? This virus is taking all the joy out of growing African violets.

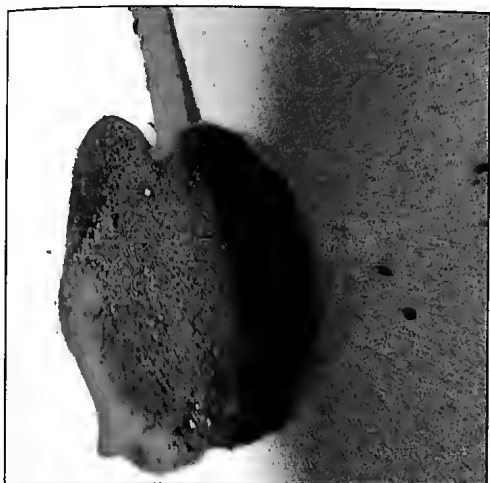
As of today, I have discarded all of my large plants, whether they were positive or negative. It is too expensive to test 50 to 100 plants. I am



*Notice darker colored areas between the veins on leaves that are usually a solid color. You have to know what each variety should look like before assuming a plant has INSV. Testing is the only certain diagnosis.*



planning to leave the room vacant for several months except for leaves that have long been in plastic bags. I will spray and clean with Clorox® and after several months test any young plants that result from these leaves before I add them back into my collection. This is the method that others have used successfully. It is heart breaking to say the least!



*Leaf is distorted with lighter green "blister" areas around the edge.*

In the future, I plan to test any plants that I purchase. The cost is about \$5.00 per plant, but is well worth it in the long run. I believe that we should take turkey bags with us to shows and bag our show plants if we plan to take them home. Also, I plan to drench any new plants with liquid Marathon® to prevent any larvae that might be hiding in the soil. This is the step that I feel I should have been doing before. Thrips could survive in a bag for many months and then appear when the bag is opened.

I can't emphasize enough the importance of not having thrips in your collection. If you have an infected plant but *do not* have thrips, it will not spread to your other plants. You will probably eventually throw the infected plant away. I know several people who *never* take their show plants home – even if they have to give them away. This is probably a very *good* idea.

If you are testing your plants, don't give credence to results on young plants. The leaves on young plants are much *thinner*, and you may not have the proper amount of leaf sample. Keep them isolated and test them again when they are more mature. The same applies to semis and miniature plants.

The sample must be the proper size and thickness (1" x 1").



*Center and right side of this semiminature are showing signs of INSV. Leaves on the left side appear to be healthy. It takes a while for INSV to spread to all areas of a plant.*

I can't tell you how devastated I am about this. Not for myself, but that I might have passed the disease on to others. I thought I had always taken every precaution, but apparently I needed to do more. I believe it takes six months or longer for infected plants to show even the vaguest symptoms, and if there are even a few thrips in the area, the disease will be spread. Right now I don't even want to think about hybridizing new 'Buckeyes.' In time, I might.



*Streptocarpus leaf showing various colors in the veins and prominent ring spots.*

**Editor's note:** To order test strips from Agdia call 1-800-622-4342 or <http://www.agdia.com>

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Testing club plants would be a good club program.

# Coming Events



## February 1 & 2 - FLORIDA

First Lakeland AVS  
Annual Judged Show and Sale  
Christ Lutheran Church  
2715 Lakeland Hills Blvd  
Lakeland, FL  
Feb 1 - Noon to 6pm  
Feb 2 - 9am to 5pm  
Info: mdilorenzo3@tampabay.rr.com

## February 9 - OREGON

Portlandia Violet Club Sale/Display  
Portland Nursery  
9000 S.E. Division  
Hours: 10am - 3pm  
Info: (503) 761-7861

## February 16 - ARIZONA

Desert Sun AV & Gesneriad Society Show/Sale  
Sale: 9:00am until 4:00 pm  
Show: 11:00am until 4:00 pm  
Free Parking & Admission:  
Valley Garden Center  
1809 North 15th Ave.  
1 Block North of McDowell Rd.)  
Phoenix, Arizona  
Seminar: 10:00am - Door Prize

## February 22 & 23 - FLORIDA

Tampa AVS Show  
Farm Bureau Building  
100 S. Mulrennan Road  
Valrico, FL  
Feb 22 - Noon - 5pm  
Feb 23 - 9am - 3pm

## March 1 & 2 - FLORIDA

Central Florida African Violet Society, Inc.  
Beardall Senior Center,  
800 Delaney Ave.  
Orlando, FL 32801  
Mar 1 - Noon - 4pm  
Mar 2 - 10am - 4pm  
(Show room opens at noon)  
Free admission and parking  
Info: L. Price laprice41@yahoo.com

## March 2 & 3 - TEXAS

Spring Branch African Violet Club  
Annual Spring Sale  
Hermann Park Garden Center  
1500 Hermann Park Drive  
Houston, TX 77004  
March 2 - 10am - 4pm  
March 3 - 10am - 3pm  
Info: Karla Ross 281-748-8417  
Email: kjwross@yahoo.com

## March 9 - CALIFORNIA

South Coast AVS  
Judged Show/Sale  
South Coast Botanic Garden  
26300 Crenshaw Blvd.  
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA  
Hours: 11:30am - 4pm show  
11am - 4pm Sales  
Info: Jacquie Eisenhut  
(310) 325-2993  
Email: jeisenhut@hotmail.com



# In Memory

## John Earley

John J. Earley, 77, passed away in October, 2012. He retired as a Fire Captain from the Norfolk, Virginia Fire Department after 44 years of service. He and his wife, Elaine, were long time members of the Tidewater African Violet Society and loved growing violets. He will be dearly missed.

## Oscar Faoro

Northern California's African violet and gesneriad societies lost one of our pillars in September 2012, when Oscar Faoro passed away. Oscar was 93 years young and had served and supported our societies and the Northern California Council (NCC) for thirty years. Over time, Oscar has served as club president, show chairman, expert grower, delegate to NCC, Mr. Hospitality, Mr. Supplies, and

our soul. Oscar always had the perfect joke for every occasion. He and his wife of 68 years, Leona, supported our clubs with caring, welcoming personalities that nurtured everyone and allowed the rest of the members to gain an additional set of parents. Oscar could grow anything spectacularly in an Oyama pot. His favorite violets were 'Tomahawk' and 'Frozen in Time', and he could also grow *Streptocarpus* spectacularly.

## "Thrips Last Stand" CD by Kathy Brewster

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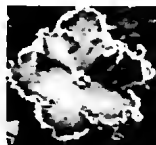
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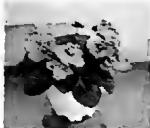
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# **African Violet**

## **MAGAZINE**

**March • April 2013**

**Volume 66**

**Number 2**



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Send check payable to AVSA for new or renewable membership to AVSA Office, 2375 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702; phone 409-839-4725. Remit in U.S. dollars with draft or check on a USA bank. **See Membership Application.** Master Card/Visa accepted.

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**COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AND COMMERCIAL SALES & EXHIBITS:** Lynn Lombard, 790 Ridgecrest Dr., Colfax, CA 95715. For information on convention entries or sales room, contact Lynn Lombard. *Email* <lynn\_lombard@worldnet.att.net>

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# African Violet

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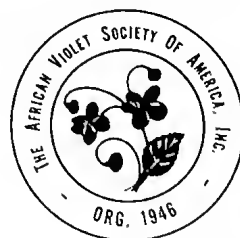
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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.



# President's Message

By Linda Hall, President

517 E. Elm St. • Ravenwood, MO 64479

Email: Linda.hall6641@hotmail.com

I can't believe it is already March. Spring is just around the corner and so are all those beautiful African violet shows. Do you have a spring show? Are all your plants transplanted and groomed, ready to put out the most gorgeous display of blooms? I have been working diligently trying to get my flowers transplanted. I grow about 300 African violets and other Gesneriads, along with some orchids and cacti. *Once a plant lover, always a plant lover.* However, in my part of the country, outside flowers are not planted until the May 1st due to frost.

I want to let you know that the challenge made last month by an anonymous donor, was matched by another anonymous donor! I am so proud to belong to an organization where the members want to help out when the Society needs it. I wrote letters to all Life Members asking if they could also help out. The majority of our Life Members bought their memberships (me included) when the cost was very low. Over the years the cost of printing and mailing of the magazine, as well as utilities and insurance at the office have gone up considerably. The Life Members were very generous! We received donations from individuals and affiliates. Again, I can't thank you all enough for your generosity. One donor wrote to me personally and said that they wanted to keep AVSA "viable and strong." You all did that and I thank you!



I have exciting news. We now have a site for our 2014 convention - Nashville, Tennessee. The hotel will be very accommodating and the tours...oh, wait until you see what the tours are! The Holtkamps of Holtkamp Greenhouses are sponsoring the convention with help from Lonestar African Violet Council, Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society (MAAVS) and the Nashville African Violet Club. What a great time this will be!

One other very serious note from me personally. On January 28th of this year my computer was hacked into. I started getting phone calls at 8:15 in the morning letting me know this. If you have ever sent me an email you probably received a strange message supposedly from me, stating that I was in a foreign country and my cousin Alex was very sick and that I needed \$3,000.00. **None of this is true.** I was also hacked into in December, but it only affected members of the Board or Directors and it was an advertisement. I think that was just a "dry run" for what was to come. **Never give out your password!** Hotmail, and other email providers will not ask for it. I sincerely apologize if this caused an inconvenience to anyone, but I had no control over it.

Until next time!



See you in  
**AUSTIN, TEXAS!**  
May 26 - June 2!

# Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

I hope all of you have registered for the convention, or intend to do so soon.

When I first asked **Penny Smith-Kerker** if her Austin club would consider hosting an AVSA convention, I thought it was a long shot. If I am not mistaken, the last Austin convention was in 1978...so I think it's time!

When you get to Austin one of the first things you'll notice is the lack of humidity.

Even when it's hot, the Texas Hill Country doesn't have that oppressive "steam-bath" feeling that we're so used to in Beaumont, on the southeast Texas coast.

**Glenda Williams**, an accomplished writer and photographer, has written a great article with photos about some of the tours that are available at this convention. (Page 14) The convention hosts have come up with some outstanding and interesting places for you to visit.

So many people that you meet in Texas have family in Austin, including Jenny, Amy, and I. I lived there in the late '60s, when the music scene was expanding, and Willie Nelson, Jerry Jeff Walker, and many others were playing around town. I have one son and daughter-in-law, three grandsons, a couple of brothers, several nieces and nephews, and two great-nephews, living in the Austin area. Austin is an enormous city because after visiting, so many people decide to move there!

The Convention Luncheon Auction is one of my favorites events at convention. It's a lot of fun and everyone has a great time. Our generous members contribute African violet-related items and those attending the luncheon stay for the auction. They sure enjoy out-bidding each other!



Jenny, Amy, and I have also enjoyed bidding, and I've been fortunate enough to get a couple of gorgeous handmade quilts. We've also had members donate auction prizes to the office, one a beautiful framed needlepoint that Jenny and I had hoped to win, but were outbid! Violet people are not only very nice, but generous!

Jenny, Amy, and I are always honored by the request that we sit on the dais during the luncheon, but I admit it's a little uncomfortable, especially when certain people are determined to make us laugh...

Thanks for all the kind words about the AVM. I too, have enjoyed the more technical articles by **Ronn Nadeau** and **Neil Lipson**. Fortunately, these writers have other articles on the way!

The African violets in the light stand downstairs in the AVSA office are doing well, and Jenny and Amy are hoping to have entries for the Austin show. The plants in my office windows are thriving, actually better than expected with the long, cold winter we've had.

I have four African violets, one a species, and two sinningias. They are not perfectly groomed, but seem to do well in spite of my lack of attention.

Spring is slowly arriving, all of my hyacinths are up and adding color to the weeds that have overrun my flower beds. I'm really looking forward to Daylight Savings Time, and digging in the dirt, planting impatiens, and more Confederate jasmine on my fence.

Ruth



# Office Update

By Jenny Daugereau, AVSA Office Manager

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: [avsa@earthlink.net](mailto:avsa@earthlink.net)

It's that time of year again. AVSA's annual convention is right around the corner. May 26 - June 2, we will be meeting in the beautiful capital city of Texas. Austin holds a special place in my heart, my children and grandchildren live there, and when I retire, I will also live there.

It is a wonderful city full of fun things to do. I think our Tour Director has offered a few of those very things. The bat watching and dinner cruise is going to be memorable. I have actually watched those bats come out from under the Congress Street overpass from the street view, and from a small electric boat in the water below. It is hard to believe that this many bats could live under a busy downtown overpass, but they do and it is fascinating to watch them head out on their nightly flight.

Another of the tours I would recommend is the trip to San Antonio. If you know anything about Texas or the people who live here, you know we love to show off the Alamo. It's an important part of our history. The Riverwalk is wonderful and I recommend walking along or riding in a boat down the river. So much to see and do in Austin and San Antonio, I know our



members will fall in love with Texas while visiting here.

All of our tours are great this year and I hope you can get signed up for all. Don't miss the sites Austin and the surrounding area has to offer. We are going to have a great time.

Bring your violets! Our Texas growers are great, but we need you to bring your plants, too. Lets make this a Texas-size show, you know what we say down here "Every thing is bigger in Texas" so lets let the world know that also includes violet shows! Y'all come!

**Please get your convention registration to the office as soon as possible.** It will help the AVSA office staff make sure we are all ready for convention. Amy, Ruth and I look forward to seeing you there.

**Attention Clubs:** Please make sure that you are updating your officers when you pay your yearly dues. If dues are paid before new officers have been elected, please make sure you email the office ([avsa@earthlink.net](mailto:avsa@earthlink.net)) your new slate, or mail them to us at 2375 North St., Beaumont TX. 77702. **Include the officers' names and contact information.**

## POTTING UP BABY PLANTS

By Kerry Knight

Your mother leaf has done her job and produced babies, which can vary anywhere from one to eight plants, sometimes more. You can start to transplant your babies from about 1 inch (3cm) on or if you feel it is better to leave them longer up to around 3 inches (8cm) is fine.

It is best to separate babies when the potting mix is on the dry side. Ease your babies and mother leaf out of the pot.

What you have to look for are strong plantlets and those that have two center leaves. Discard any that have lost their centers, or that look weak. Pick only the strongest ones.

Using the smallest pot, write the name of the plant and the date on the side of the pot. Insert an acrylic

wick in the bottom of the pot and partly fill with moist African violet potting mix.

Insert the baby plantlet into potting mix and gradually add more mix. If the plant is not steady in the pot, you can secure it with the addition of a couple of hairpins to hold it steady until the roots have developed.

Groom the plant with a brush, clean the pot, and water with a little tepid water. I do not fertilize my baby plants for a month after re-potting, to avoid fertilizer salt build up.

Next thing is to place your babies in a well-lit, warm position, and not in direct sunlight if growing in natural light.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Inc.

# Question Box

By Sue Haffner

3015 Timmy Ave. • Clovis, CA 93612

Email: [sueh@csufresno.edu](mailto:sueh@csufresno.edu) • [haff.sue2@gmail.com](mailto:haff.sue2@gmail.com)

Dear Friends,

I hope you and your violets are doing well. The spring show season is upon us again, and I hope that your local club will sponsor a show, judged or not. If you don't have a local club, perhaps you can find a violet show and sale somewhere in your vicinity. It's always fun to see the gorgeous entries. You will find yourself energized to get working with your violets. I know I always do.

Martha in Alabama sent me a comment regarding the use of Physan 20™ as an algacide. "It's been my experience that it does not kill existing algae, but works like a charm as a preventative." Thanks, Martha!



suffered from over-watering. I've shared this experience – having some newly-transplanted plantlets give up the ghost – so I can sympathize. In many cases, I lacked tiny containers, such as thumb-pots, and so had to put them into containers that I knew were too large. Sometimes this worked out; sometimes not.

The grower asked if she might have planted the little plants too deep. That's a possibility, and it's something we all need to watch out for. You don't want to bury the crown, as this can easily lead to rot. I've found that, when you've got a plant all repotted, give it just the slightest tug to raise it out of the mix, just a fraction of an inch. As you resume watering, the plant will eventually settle into the pot.

**Question:** *Help! I have recently potted up some of my babies. They looked great in their 2-inch pots. They were getting too big for their pots and it was time to pot them up. However, 2-3 of them became limp and collapsed. The stems of the leaves were turning brown from the center, so I'm assuming it is crown rot. It didn't happen to all of them. Am I planting them too deep?*

Answer: This does, superficially, sound like crown rot, if I understand what is meant by leaf petioles "turning brown from the center." If the outer leaves had collapsed while the center seemed firm, it could have been an instance of what is known as "transplant shock." I wondered if there had been anything different about the plants that developed this damage that set them apart from the plants that seemed okay. Were these the smallest of the plantlets? She didn't say that she was dealing with a clump of baby plants that she had had to divide, so I assumed that she referred to single-crown plants. Still, it might have been true that it was the smaller of the plantlets that were affected. If so, they might be in pots too large and so

**Question:** *Our club purchased a dozen, or so, plants of a particular cultivar to use as Project Plants in our next show. Everyone who got one is obligated to display the plant, blooming or not, in our spring show. Now that the members have their plants, we were discussing how the plant didn't seem to match its description on the dealer's website (or in the AVML). For one thing, the plant is supposed to have red-backed foliage. None of our plants have this. I checked online for photos of the variety and I did see one picture that seemed to show a plant without this kind of foliage. Could it be that this trait can be affected by different growing conditions, temperature, etc? Or maybe there are two sort of variant versions of this plant going around? The blossoms seem to correspond to the description, though only a few members have had blossoms, so far. (Only one member has gotten a lot of bloom, which she attributed to feeding her plant with iron chelate.) Do you*

***think it's possible that the dealer made a mistake and sent the wrong plants?***

Answer: Well, first, it's highly unlikely that the dealer sent your club the wrong plants. Commercial violet dealers are much too careful to make such an error. Assuming that the plants you received are young ones, they might not be mature enough to display their "true" foliage. I have to be honest, though: the issue with the red-backed foliage has me a bit stumped. I just got up to check my own plants, and even small red-backed ones show the trait. Hmm. I don't recall ever reading or hearing that this particular attribute is one that is affected by cultural conditions. I would be glad to hear from anyone who could contribute to this discussion. The grower said that she saw an online photo in which the plant appeared not to have red-backed leaves. You sometimes have to be careful when evaluating color in photographs, as different photographic programs can skew colors toward either end of the spectrum. Still, I suppose it is possible that a variant form of the plant exists.

As iron chelate was mentioned in the question, I thought I would expand on that a bit. Chelation is a chemical process that binds the iron molecule to another substance, usually an amino acid. This forms a more stable molecule that is easier for the plant to absorb. Plants need iron in order to produce chlorophyll, which is vital for healthy cell function. Chlorophyll also gives a plant its green color. I haven't used this, myself, but I do know good growers who swear by it.

***Question: I am growing my African violets under lights. However, I have doubts about where to place light and dark foliated plants. Some suggest that dark foliage and blue flowers should be at the center and lighter foliage plants with pink or white flowers at the ends. Others say just the opposite. Who is correct?***

Answer: Well, it's really difficult to give a hard-and-fast rule about this. It depends on the individual plant. If a plant isn't happy with its conditions, it will let you know. Not every cultivar will prosper under artificial lights. If the leaves are reaching upward, it's a sign that the light level is too low. If

the plant develops a tight center, it may be getting too much light. Temperature is also an issue here, with plants under the centers of the tubes subject to higher temperatures than those at the ends; plants on lower shelves in cooler locations than those on higher shelves. I asked the grower if she was having a problem with her plants, and she admitted that she wasn't. Her plants were doing fine; she was just confused by the contradictory advice she was receiving. So, I offered the advice I always do: if your plants are doing well, growing and blooming and you're happy with them, you're obviously doing it right. Don't change your procedures just because you hear that someone else does it differently. What works for them may not work for you (and vice versa.)

***Question: My Mom and I have a big pot of Achimenes that a friend gave us years ago. The plant blooms and does well outside on the veranda all summer. Her friend gave mom very explicit instructions on how to care for it: at the end of October or early November we cut down the foliage and put the pot in a paper bag. The bag sits in a dark corner of the basement until May 1st. It always amazes me to see, when I take the pot out of the bag, the beginnings of tiny shoots. How does the plant know that spring has arrived?***

Answer: Plants can be smarter (or more subtle, more devious) than we think. Those that exhibit dormant periods respond to various environmental cues when they break dormancy, such as day-length or temperature. Even in a dark basement these changes are perceptible – although we may not notice them, ourselves. Now, the person who gave you the plant had grown it herself over time and had figured out a successful regimen for it, so her advice worked for you. *Achimenes* have varying degrees of dormancy. Some species and older varieties have longer dormant periods than a lot of modern hybrids. When your *Achimenes* has finished blooming and is starting to look "tired", stop watering and let it go dormant. I let the foliage die back before cutting it down, unless I want to take cuttings.

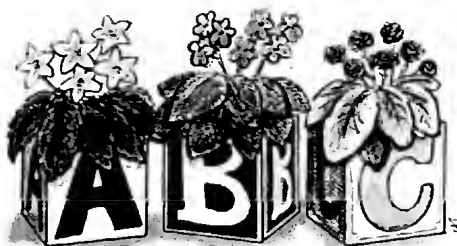


Having written the above, I have to admit that I'm no expert on *Achimenes*. But I have a friend who grows a number of gesneriads in a greenhouse and she drove across town the other day with a hanging pot of *Achimenes* just to show it off to me. She'd had the plant for years and was not especially impressed by it. But just now (November, as I write this) she was putting plants away in the greenhouse for the winter. Making room for hanging plants, she was surprised to see the *Achimenes* with 5-6 upright stems covered with cerise blossoms. When she looked into the pot, it appeared that just about all the potting mix had washed out and the rhizomes were wedged amidst the Styrofoam peanuts that she puts in the bottoms of her pots. Talk about good drainage! She waters everything with a hose at least once a day,

so there was no chance of the plant drying out and going dormant. She was amazed that the plant was doing so well without soil. See, plants are tougher than we think!

**Question:** *How do I use Epsom salts on my violets? It isn't really like table salt, is it?*

Answer: Epsom salts (epsomite) is a natural substance that contains trace mineral salts of sulfur and magnesium, both required for good growth and blooming. No, it isn't like table salt. In solution, it is nearly neutral, so doesn't affect the pH of the soil mix. To prepare it, put two tablespoons of Epsom salts into a gallon of tepid water; stir or swirl to dissolve. Use once a month as a drench and let the plants fully drain in the sink before putting them back on the shelf.



### Membership Application

Application for Membership Recommended by \_\_\_\_\_ Mem. # \_\_\_\_\_  
The African Violet Society of America, Inc.

2375 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702

www.avsa.org

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Membership runs one year from date paid and includes 6 issues of the AFRICAN VIOLET Magazine.

- ☐ Individual Membership USA (\$30.00)
- ☐ Associate Member USA (\$15.00-no magazine)  
(Must reside at same address as a person having any other Class of membership)
- ☐ International Individual, Canada (\$35.00)
- ☐ International Associate, Canada (\$17.50)
- ☐ International Individual, other than Canada (\$40.00)
- ☐ International Associate, other than Canada (\$20.00)
- ☐ Commercial USA (\$60.00)
- ☐ Commercial Canada (\$65.00)
- ☐ Commercial International, other than Canada (\$70.00)
- ☐ Affiliate Chapter, including local, state, regional, and Judge's Councils, USA (\$35.00)
- ☐ Affiliate Chapter, Canada (\$40.00)
- ☐ Affiliate Chapter International, other than Canada (\$45.00)
- ☐ Library (\$30.00)
- ☐ Life Member USA (\$1,000.00)
- ☐ Life Member International (\$1,500.00)

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal Mem # \_\_\_\_\_

(Please type or print)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to AVSA, Inc.  
INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS: please remit in US\$ with a draft or check on a USA bank. International Postal money orders accepted. **Dues are not refundable.**

VISA / MC accepted Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_



# AVSA Board Nominees



## **For Secretary: Elmer Godeny**

Elmer Godeny grew up in New Jersey and received his BS in Microbiology from Penn State. After receiving his Ph.D. in Microbiology with a concentration in Virology from the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, he moved back to the Philadelphia area and then to Atlanta, GA. He began growing African violets after he moved to Baton Rouge, LA.

Elmer has been a member of AVSA since 1994 and is an AVSA Senior Judge and Teacher. In fact, he will be teaching the Judge's School at the 2013 AVSA Convention in Austin, TX. He served as Convention Chair of the 2003 AVSA National Convention in Baton Rouge, and has served as a member of the AVSA Board of Directors. He was the Chair of the AVSA Convention Schedule Revision Committee and a member of the Convention Committee. He currently serves on the AVSA Research Committee and is the past Chair and current Member of the AVSA Scholarship Committee.

Elmer was a member of Sundowner's African Violet Society of Baton Rouge for over seventeen years. He has served in many positions for the club including President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Show Chair, as well as chairing many other show committees. He was also a member of the Louisiana Council of African Violets Judges and Growers where he served as Editor of the newsletter and Vice-President. He has been a member of the Dixie African Violet Society, Spring Branch African Violet Society of Houston, and the Lone Star Council in Texas.

Recently, Elmer moved to Tulsa, OK, where he joined the African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa and Missouri Valley African Violet Society. He recently joined the Gesneriad Society.



## **For Director: Mary Lou Harden**

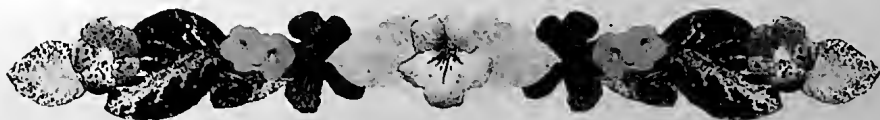
Mary Lou Harden, of Seffner, FL, is a Life Member of AVSA, was Convention Chair for the 1997 St. Pete Beach Convention, and has for the past sixteen years served

as Bylaws Committee Chair.

Mary Lou got her start in growing African violets in 1976, when she joined her local affiliate, Tampa AVS. She has served as its President, First Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, and has served as Show Chair, Yearbook Editor, Newsletter Editor, and Parliamentarian. She excels in Designs and enjoys sharing her expertise with others, giving programs on plant and flower arrangements and container gardens.

A Life Member of Dixie AVS, she is Editor of its quarterly publication, *The Dixie News*. Mary Lou is a member and past president of the African Violet Council of Florida, a member of the Gesneriad Society, and a charter member of the Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society.

She is a graduate of Ozark Christian College, Joplin, MO, with a Bachelor of Theology degree, major in music. She serves as president of Florida Alpha Parliamentarians Unit of Tampa, is a rose grower, and directs and accompanies the Sugartime Singers, bringing the "golden oldies" to residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities.





*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

*xAchimenantha*  
*'Yellow Submarine'*

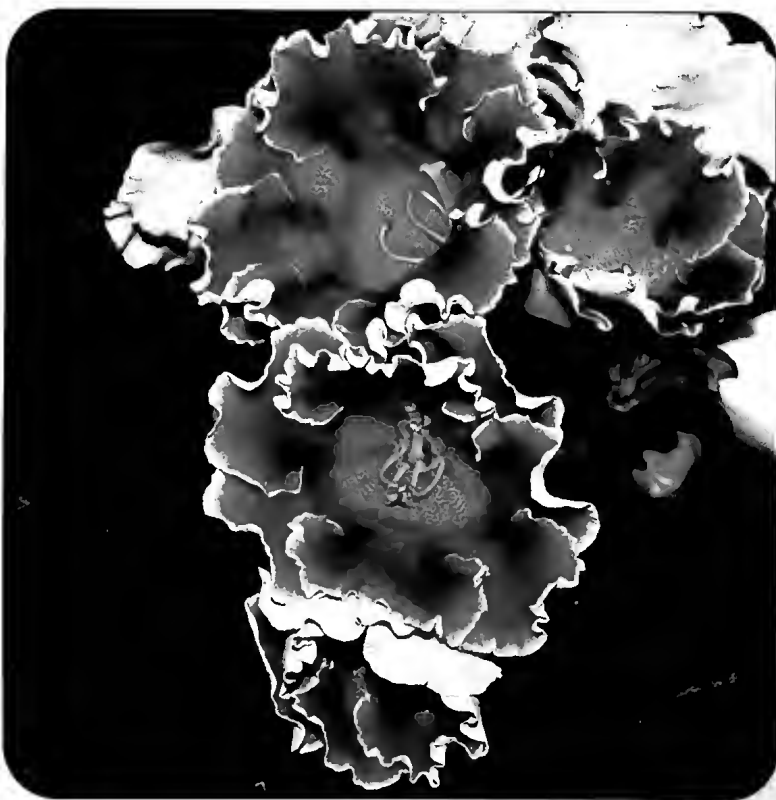
*Hybridized and Grown by: Thad Scaggs*



*Mac's  
Galactic  
Grandeur*

*Exhibited by:  
Catherine Thompson  
Hybridized by:  
G. McDonald  
Semiminiature*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



*Sinningia  
'Summer  
Celebration'*

*Exhibited by: Martha Bell*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

# In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

Each organism on the planet has a set of genetic instructions contained in its genome or DNA. The DNA for higher organisms is arranged as sets of chromosomes. Some organisms only have a single set of chromosomes in their genome. Biologists refer to this single set of chromosomes as the "N" number for the species, or the haploid number. African violets have 15 different kinds of chromosomes that make up their haploid number ( $N=15$ ). Haploid African violets have been created from anther cells under tissue culture conditions. These plants are slow growing, but are about half the size of a typical plant. Haploid African violets will flower, but the blooms are often misshapen and are sexually sterile. Haploid plants were once thought to be a way to create new miniature African violets, but this idea did not prove practical due to their slow growth and sexual sterility. Haploid plants remained scientific curiosities and have never been available on the commercial market.

Normal African violets have two sets of chromosomes and are diploid ( $2N=30$ ). It doesn't matter if the plant is a miniature, standard, large standard, or a trailer; the number of chromosomes is the same. Hybridizers can generally cross any two diploid plants together and get seedlings. These plants have been the heart and soul of hybridizing for the last 75 years and are the mainstay of any African violet collection.

Other levels of chromosome numbers are possible. In fact, plant breeders of other species such as day lilies like to increase the number to tetraploid ( $4N$ ) because the resulting organism and flowers are larger. Tetraploid versions of African violets are known ( $4N=60$ ). These are usually called Supremes or Amazon series plants. An important historical series of African violets, the DuPont plants, were also thought to



be tetraploids. Tetraploids are sexually fertile and can be crossed together using standard hybridization techniques.

Plants with three sets of chromosomes are called triploids ( $3N$ ). These plants can be created by crossing a diploid plant with a tetraploid plant. The resulting triploid African violet has 45 chromosomes. Triploids are sexually sterile, but can be reproduced by leaf cuttings. Triploids are often intermediate in size between a diploid and tetraploid plant, following the trend of increasing plant size with increasing number of chromosomes. Triploid African violets have probably been created, but likely unrecognized for their unique chromosome number.

In theory, higher levels of chromosome number could be created. In other plant species, hexaploids ( $6N$ ) and octoploids ( $8N$ ) are known. However, given the slower growth and brittleness of tetraploid African violets, it seems unlikely that moving to higher ploidy levels will produce anything useful for growers.

***Q: Can the use of certain genetic traits be used to reduce the overall size of an African violet?***

A: I'm guessing that you are looking for traits other than the "size genes" that affect the overall size of an African violet plant. Yes, certain traits do tend to reduce the size of the offspring. Some of the best examples are girl foliage and clackamas foliage (leaves with several parallel main veins instead of a single main vein). Both traits tend to reduce the size of the offspring when used in a cross. The traits are also additive in their effect. Two copies of the gene will reduce the plant size even further. However, the leaves tend to get pretty wild with girl and clackamas foliage, especially in the double dose or homozygous condi-

tion, and I'm not sure I'd recommend going this route in your hybridizing to reduce plant size.

I've seen hybrids that were described as having "modified" girl foliage. The girl foliage mutation has originated more than once, and several different "types" are available. I would suspect that any of the girl foliage versions would help to reduce plant size.

Plants with bustled foliage and/or wasp flowers may also be reduced in plant size. At least it seems that most of the hybrids with these traits are smaller growers. This might be another trait you could try for reducing plant size.

***Q: Some hybridizers seem to produce more chimera plants than others. Do they have some sort of hybridizing secret?***

A: As far as I know, chimeras are happy genetic accidents. There isn't a "chimera gene" that hybridizers can use to create these plants. Most hybridizers really regret the lack of a "chimera gene" given the popularity of the chimera flowering plants. Producing a chimera appears to be more or less a happy accident. The more seedlings or leaf cuttings you raise, the higher your chance of getting a chimera. I suspect that the success of some hybridizers is just a reflection of the numbers of seedlings or cuttings they raise and a keen eye that watches for the unexpected offspring like a chimera to pop up.

One source of new chimera plants is to look through the shipments of African violets at your local grocery store or other vendor that sells African violets. Commercial growers may miss a chimera in their packaging, and a watchful grower can sometimes find a new chimera in a shipment. I've known some growers who make "arrangements" with a local store to know the arrival date of a new plant shipment just so they can be the first to look through the plants for a possible chimera. The plant won't sell for a different price, so finding a chimera this way can be a very inexpensive way to add a chimera to your collection.

***Q: How are bell-shaped flowers inherited? I didn't see the trait listed on the dominant/recessive gene list.***

A: If I had to give a ruling on bell shaped flowers, I'd probably come down on the side of bells being a dominant genetic trait. However, bells are best expressed in combination with the recessive star shaped blooms in order to get a true "bell". This can complicate the inheritance pattern and disguise how it is being inherited. One hybridizer once reported to me that a cross of bell with pansy shaped give offspring that were somewhat intermediate in form. The overall shape was pansy, but the petals were split further down the edges, giving a bell flavor to the bloom.

## Coming Events Deadlines

January Issue - November 1

July Issue - May 1

March Issue - January 1

September Issue - July 1

May Issue - March 1

November Issue - September 1

# Enjoy the 2013 Convention Tours as You "DANCE ACROSS TEXAS"

By Glenda Williams

Put on your "fun" shoes and plan on several days of enjoying the diverse cultural touring opportunities of Texas offered during the 2013 convention.



*Photo Credit: Glenda Williams*

Enjoy a day trip to the Hill Country and visit **Wild seed Farms** - a 200-acre farm featuring wildflower seeds grown, harvested, and marketed worldwide. Summer visitors are treated to a spectacular array of color in bloom - everything from sunflowers, zinnias, cosmos, or other warm weather bloomers. Visit the well-stocked nursery, live butterfly exhibit, and shop for seeds and other flower gifts in the Market Center. Relax in the Brewbonnet Biergarten and enjoy the incredible view of their wildflower fields. Travel a little further down the road to **Fredricksburg, TX** - a quaint little town alive with Texan hospitality and German traditions. Stroll along the city's historic Main Street while window shopping in the 150+ stores, boutiques, and art galleries. Be sure to visit the local Five & Dime store and enjoy lunch at one of the local restaurants.



*San Antonio Riverwalk.  
Photo Courtesy of  
www.SanAntonioRiverwalk.com*



*Alamo at night. Photo Courtesy of  
www.SanAntonioRiverwalk.com*

**San Antonio** - built by Franciscan missionaries in 1718 - offers a trip filled with Spanish/Mexican heritage and culinary enjoyment. Take a morning stroll through the **San Antonio Botanical Gardens** and see birds up close, learn conservation tips, enjoy the serenity of a Japanese garden, and see the wide variety of native Texas plants. Explore the "San Antonio de Valero" - or "**Alamo**" - the old Spanish church and famous Texas historical site where Colonel William B. Travis and David Crockett gave their lives defending Texas liberty. Step down from street level and take an afternoon stroll down the **Paseo del Rio** or "**River Walk**" - the beautifully restored, eight miles of park and pathways along the San Antonio

River - landscaped beautifully, and filled with numerous hotels, restaurants, shops, museums, and outdoor patios. Dine on Tex-Mex food at one of the dozens of cafes, bistros, or elegant restaurants or shop at over 60 shops at the **Rivercenter Mall**.

Experience the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center**



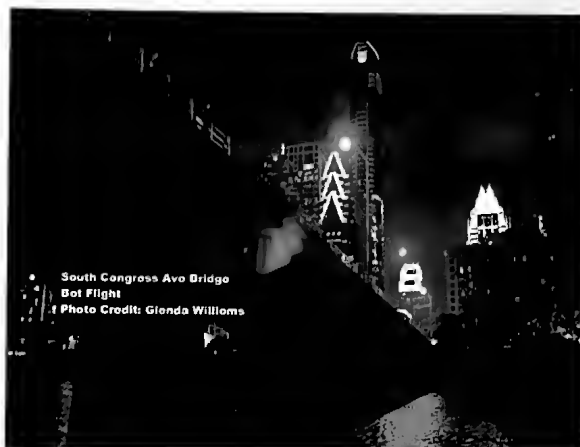
- 270 acres of Texas' largest assortment of wildflowers and native plants, stunning gardens, educational opportunities, nature trails, and shopping. Walk the nature trails and see spectacular gardens, visit the Observation Tower for a bird's eye view, and see aqueducts and water features of the 70,000 gallon rainwater collection system. Visit the **Bob Bullock State History Museum** to see the "Story of Texas" through the Museum's educational experiences - three floors of interactive exhibits, a special effects show - The Star of Destiny - in the Texas Spirit Theater, and Austin's IMAX Theatre featuring the signature large-format film "Texas: The Big Picture."



*Photo Credit: Glenda Williams*

**Zilker Botanical Garden** - 31 acres of varied topography on the south bank of the Colorado River near downtown Austin - offers diverse

topography and multiple garden areas depicting different habitats and an array of native, hybrid, and exotic plants and insects. The Garden is the centerpiece of **Zilker Park** and the **Lady Bird Johnson Lake (Colorado River) Corridor**.



*Photo Credit: Glenda Williams*

Cruise on the **Flagship Pride and Joy II** while enjoying the serene waters of the beautiful **Lady Bird Johnson Lake**. See the incredible variety of flora, fauna, and dramatic landscapes inspired by the late Lady Bird Johnson. Enjoy a Texas-style fajita dinner while listening and dancing to Texas music. At dusk, catch the internationally famous **Bat Flight** from under the **Congress Avenue Bridge** with downtown Austin as the backdrop.

## Growing Streps for Show By Dale Martens

A show plant needs to be started about five months before the show. At that time, decide if you are going to have a "single" or a grouping of three in a pot.

You can put a plant from a Solo cup into a 3-inch pot and then disbud it for three months.

You can put three young streps (all the same hybrid or species) in a 4-inch pot and then disbud for three months. While disbudding, use a balanced fertilizer or a higher nitrogen orchid fertilizer at the rate of 1/4 teaspoon of fertilizer per gallon of water.

Two months before the show, start allowing the plant to bloom. Remove any leaves that don't look good. Trim leaves that have bad edges by using craft scissors with a pinking-shear type blade, but follow the natural curves of the leaves. Make sure the leaves don't have dirt, dust, or pet hair on them.

Two months before the show, make sure you are turning the pot at least once a week so that the flowers are not one-sided. I continue to use orchid fertilizer, but some switch to high bloom.

If you did not start to groom plants for show five months ago, then look at your pot of streps and remove any leaves that are too yellowish. Again, trim any that have bad tips or edges.

Right before the show, carefully remove any flower stem stubs. Remove faded flowers. Make sure the pots are clean or you'll lose points under "condition."

If you want to see good strep show plants, then look at past convention photos at the Gesneriad Society site at <http://www.gesneriadsociety.org>.

*From the Lone Star AV Council Newsletter*

# In Memory



## Helen Pangola

Helen Pangola, the last surviving charter member of the Richmond African Violet Society in Richmond, Virginia, passed away in January 2013 at the age of 98. She had been an active member of the society, established in 1948, until the year 2000 when she was made an Honorary Life Member.

Helen got her start with African violets in 1945 when she purchased her home and found several African violets in the kitchen window. At the Society's first AVSA approved show in 1950, she was the outstanding winner with first, second, and third place in the show. Many of the Society's early summer picnics were held at the Pangola cabin with her husband John catering.

Helen never stopped growing the violets she loved despite deteriorating health. She always attended our shows and would contribute to the Society from her Bingo

winnings, another favorite activity of hers. Helen will be fondly remembered.

## Donna Tobin

The African Violet Society of Minnesota mourns the loss of an honorary lifetime member. Donna Tobin passed away on February 3, 2013. She had been a member for over forty years and held many positions in the Minnesota Society. She was also a long-time member of AVSA, attending and participating in numerous national conventions and serving as an AVSA Director.

Though her contributions were many and varied, Donna will be remembered above all for her exceptional gift of design. Over the years, she generously shared her knowledge and artistic talent, desiring that everyone enjoy the satisfaction she derived from designing with African violets. Her *Design* columns that once appeared in the pages of *The Violet Press* will continue to be a valuable source of inspiration for future designers.

We will deeply miss Donna's presence among us and her beautiful and unique prize-winning designs that graced our shows for so many years.

## AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

Susan Hapner - *Chairman*

35 Ridge Point Dr. • Chesterfield, MO 63017

1 November 2012 to 31 January 2013 • Total \$165.00



### Thumbprint

Jan Houston  
Tanya Iverson  
Susan Raisich  
Elizabeth Burke  
Sharon Gartner



### Two-tone

AVS of Philadelphia/PA  
*In lieu of judges fee expenses  
for: Susan Arnao, Paula Bal,  
Laurel Brown, Grace Egan,  
David Tooker, Janice Murasko*  
Elizabeth Lebert



### Geneva

Ohio State Violet Society/KY

# A Family Portrait

By Mel Grice

2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, OH

Email: <melsgrice@earthlink.net

## A Family Portrait: *Primulina* 'Diane Marie'

A superb specimen of this plant was shown by Jean Marie Ross at the Tampa Bay Gesneriad Society Show in Florida in October 2012. I was fortunate enough to be on the panel of three



*Chirita* 'Diane Marie'

*Primulina* (formerly *Chirita*) 'Diane Marie' was hybridized by Bob Stewart from Stow, Massachusetts in 1990. *Primulina dryas* 'Angustifolia' and an unidentified *Primulina* species were the parents. Bob liked the plant so much that he named it for his wife, Diane Marie (Dee) Stewart. *Primulina* 'Diane Marie' forms a flat rosette with attractive silver patterning on dark green leaves. There are



judges who gave this entry a Special Judges Award. It was a serious contender for Best in Show. I might add that the hybridizer was also on the same panel of judges.

usually four flowers on each peduncle. The violet flowers have white throats with violet stripes extending onto the lip. Yellow lines also extend from the anther. The flowers are similar to the *Primulina dryas* 'Angustifolia' parent but larger and darker colored. *Primulina* 'Diane Marie' is a definite improvement over its parents, growing more compact and flatter.

*Primulinas* grow naturally in cracks in rocks with very little soil. The attractive foliage is even more succulent than an African violet. They have very shallow root systems that require good aeration with consistent moisture. I add extra coarse perlite to the bottom of shallow pans so that they are not sitting in water. My soil mix includes Pro-Mix BX, Bac-



Jean Marie Ross

*The plant was entered in the Foliage Class.*



cto, perlite, vermiculite, charcoal, and worm castings. *Primulinas* require less fertilizer than an African violet. I grow mine under two T-8 fluorescent tubes on the bottom shelf of my plant stands where it is cooler. *Primulina* 'Diane Marie' is definitely one gesneriad that everyone should have in their collection.

# Tally Time 2012

**Susan Anderson** • 4040 E. Maldonado Dr. • Phoenix, AZ 85042 • sanderson122@cox.net

Tally Time is a summary of the African violet varieties and species receiving the greatest number of awards in AVSA Standard Shows throughout the past year. I am pleased to present the 2012 annual report. It's so exciting to see which plants are winning and where they are winning. This year's report summarizes results of 53 shows from six geographic regions.

Show themes in 2012 were just as creative as ever, but there was an educational trend. Several shows centered their themes around literary classics, many others on past and present historic events, while geographic themes remained extremely popular. No matter the reason, growing African violets allows us all to learn and grow in our own way. Be sure to share the joy of violets and AVSA by teaching others about this wonderful hobby.

This year's winning varieties include many well-known favorites and also several newcomers, including the first variety to be recorded on Tally Time with a five-digit registration number. Consider adding a winning variety to your own collection.

Thanks to all participating affiliates for their timely submissions of reports and for carefully recording variety names. To have show winners included in the annual summary, please send completed Tally Time forms via mail or email by November 20th. Keep growing and showing!

	Total Number of Awards	Number Best in Show	Number Second Best	Variety Hybridizer, Registration No.	Number of Collection Awards	Best Standard, Semi, Mini, Trailer or Species
STANDARDS	11	2	1	<b>Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler</b> P. Hancock #8745	5	3
	9	1	1	<b>The Alps</b> K. Honkoshi/H. Sawara #7813	5	2
	5	1	0	<b>Blue Dragon</b> Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano #9516	3	1
	5	0	0	<b>Frozen in Time</b> Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano #9167	5	0
	5	0	0	<b>Amour Elite</b> E. Arkhipov #10044	4	1
	5	0	1	<b>Makin' Romance</b> J. Damiano #6685	3	1
	9	0	2	<b>Rob's Antique Rose</b> R. Robinson #8451	5	2
SEMIMIINIATURES	8	1	1	<b>Rob's Combustible Pigeon</b> R. Robinson #9462	3	3
	7	2	0	<b>Rob's Cool Fruit</b> R. Robinson #8608	3	2
	7	0	0	<b>Cool Blue</b> H. Pittman #8758	5	2
	6	1	0	<b>Ness' Cranberry Swirl</b> D. Ness #8135	4	1
	6	0	0	<b>Ness' Crinkle Blue</b> D. Ness #8136	5	1
	6	0	0	<b>Ness' Satin Rose</b> D. Ness #8144	5	1
	9	1	1	<b>Rob's Chilly Willy</b> R. Robinson #9461	4	3
MINIATURES	8	0	0	<b>Jolly Orchid</b> H. Pittman #9719	4	4
	7	1	1	<b>Shirl's Hawaiian Lei</b> S. Sanders #9372	2	3
	6	1	0	<b>Rob's Jitterbug</b> R. Robinson #8876	2	3
	5	0	0	<b>Orchard's Bumble Magnet</b> R. Wilson #8479	0	5
	4	1	0	<b>Jolly Jingle</b> H. Pittman	0	3
	4	0	0	<b>Precious Red</b> H. Pittman #9724	1	3
	11	2	0	<b>Rob's Boolaroo</b> R. Robinson #8053	1	8
TRAILERS	4	0	0	<b>Milky Way Trail</b> J. Stahl #7169	1	3
	3	1	0	<b>Pixie Blue</b> L. Lyon #2598	0	2
	3	0	0	<b>Cirelda</b> P. Tracey #3620	1	2
	3	0	0	<b>Fancy Trail</b> L. Lyon #3674	1	2
	3	0	0	<b>Rob's Lilli Pilli</b> R. Robinson #8063	1	2

SPECIES	11	0	0	S 8 clone rupicola	7	4
	10	1	0	S 5b clone grotei Silvert	4	5
	7	0	0	S 5a clone grandifolia	0	7
	4	0	0	S 5c1 clone ionantha	4	0
	4	0	0	S 5b clone confusa	0	4

The following table lists the award winners by geographic region.

Geographic Region: State/Province (Number of Shows)

Region I: Arizona (2), California (3), Colorado (1), New Mexico (1)

Region II: Iowa (1), Missouri (3), Ohio (4), Virginia (2), Wisconsin (1)

Region III: Connecticut (3), Massachusetts (1), New Jersey (4), New York (6), Pennsylvania (2), Virginia (2)

Region IV: Louisiana (1), Oklahoma (2), Texas (5)

Region V: Florida (2), Georgia (1), Tennessee (1)

Region VI: Nova Scotia (1), Ontario (2), Quebec (2)

		Total Number of Awards	Geographical Regopms					
Variety			I	II	III	IV	V	VI
STANDARDS	Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler	11	1	1	6	3		
	The Alps	9		1	3	2		3
	Blue Dragon	5			1		3	1
	Frozen in Time	5			3	1	1	
	Amour Elite	5	1	1	2	1	0	
	Makin' Romance	5				4	1	
SEMINIATURES	Rob's Antique Rose	9	1	3	3	2		
	Rob's Combustible Pigeon	8		7		1		
	Rob's Cool Fruit	7			3	3	1	
	Cool Blue	7		2	1	3		1
	Ness' Cranberry Swirl	6			3			3
	Ness' Crinkle Blue	6	1	2	2		1	
	Ness' Satin Rose	6	1		5			
MINIATURES	Rob's Chilly Willy	9		4	1	3		1
	Jolly Orchid	8		3	2	1		2
	Shirl's Hawaiian Lei	7			2	1	1	3
	Rob's Jitterbug	6		1	4	1		
	Orchard's Bumble Magnet	5		2	1	1	1	
	Jolly Jingle	4			2			2
	Precious Red	4	2				2	
TRAILERS	Rob's Boolaroo	11	1	2	6	1	1	
	Milky Way Trail	4		2	1	1		
	Pixie Blue	3			2		1	
	Cirelda	3		3				
	Fancy Trail	3		1		1		1
	Rob's Lilli Pilli	3				2		1
SPECIES	S 8 clone rupicola	11	3	2	5	1		
	S 5b clone grotei Silvert	10			6	3		1
	S 5a clone grandifolia	7		2	3	1	1	
	S 5c1 clone ionantha	4		3		1		
	S 5b clone confusa	4		1	1	1	1	
Number of Winners		195	11	43	68	39	15	19
Number of Shows Reported		53	7	11	18	8	4	5





*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## ***Rob's Ooey Gooley***

*Exhibited by: Debbie McInnes*

*Hybridized by: R. Robinson*

*Semiminiature*



## ***Buckeye Country Gal***

*Exhibited by:  
Debbie McInnes  
Hybridized by:  
P. Hancock  
Large*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## ***Chanticleer***

*Exhibited by:  
Donna Brinning  
Hybridized by:  
Eyerdom  
From the  
Best Buckeye Collection  
Standard*



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## AVSA BOOSTER FUND

**Shirley Berger • 2822 S. Mainsail Dr. • Avon Park, FL 33525-6032**

**Total Contributions: November 1 - December 31, 2012**



### Chimera

Michigan State AVS  
Seaview African Violet Society,  
Neptune, NJ  
*Club has disbanded*



### Geneva

Emz N. Blancet, Marquez, TX  
*Life member donation*  
Lorraine Hilfer, North Royalton, OH  
*Life member donation*  
Jimmie Miller Smith, Geary, OK  
*Life member donation*



### Multicolor

Lynn M. Egorov, Porterville, CA  
*Life member donation*  
Jane Fallaw, Pittsburg, CA  
Donna Gillogly Longview, WA  
*In memory of Lillian Hert*  
Elmer K. Godeny, Tulsa, OK  
*Life member donation*  
Irena Nicholson, Lakewood, CO  
*In honor of Nelly Levine*  
Arlene R. Smith, Delta BCV, Canada  
*Life member donation*  
Donna and Steve Turner,  
South Gate, MI  
*In memory of Nancy Farrand*  
Joan Wood, Torrance, CA  
*Life member donation*



### Two-tone

Edith L. Denney, Bel Air, MD  
*Life member donation*  
Z. Ganaway, Atlanta, GA  
*Life member donation*  
Carolyn Lantz, Minneapolis, MN  
Melissa Shopnitz, Loveland, CO  
Barbara D. Taswell-Miller, Olathe, KS  
Barbara H. and Charles Werness,  
Minneapolis, MN



### Thumbprint

Trudy Brekel, Brighton, CO  
Marie Burns, Baltimore, MD  
Lorraine G Harrison, Atmore, AL  
Donna Williams, Missouri City, TX

**Total Contributions: \$2365.43**

## Boyce Edens Research Fund

**Marlene J. Buck • 17235 N. 106th Avenue • Sun City, AZ 85373-1958**

**Donations received from August 1, 2012 - September 30, 2012 • Total = \$50.00**



### Thumbprint

Sherin Boyd, Saint John, NB, Canada

Albert Case, Marlton, NJ  
Dawna DiOrio, Billerica, MA  
Lana Soosar, Toronto, ON, Canada  
Pam West, Irving, TX

**Donations received from October 1, 2012 - November 30, 2012 • Total = \$166.00**



### Two-tone

Burbank AVS, Sunland, CA  
*In memory of Carroll McCarroll*  
Montose AVS, Woodland Hills, CA  
*In memory of Carroll McCarroll*



### Thumbprint

Bahamas AVS, Nassau NP Bahamas  
*In memory of Ruth Granger and Sybil Strachan*  
Joel Scott Bershof, Lakewood, CO

Brenda M Brasfield, Olive Branch, MS  
John F. Burke, Jr., Riverside, IL  
Susan Carter, Tulsa, OK  
Julie K. Gibson, San Antonio, TX  
Lorraine G. Harrison, Atmore, AL  
New York State Council of AV Judges  
Gail Podany, Minnetonka, MN  
Donna Williams, Missouri City, TX

## Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

**Janet Riemer • 256 Pennington-Harbourton Rd. • Pennington, NJ 08534**

**November 1, 2012 - December 31, 2012 • Total this period: \$296.00**



### Geneva

Ohio State African Violet Society



### Multicolor

AVSA Executive Committee  
*In memory of Odelia M. Matt*

African Violet Club of Burlington  
County (NJ)  
*In memory of Dorothy Taylor*



### Two-tone

Elizabeth Lebert  
Janet Riemer  
*In honor of Gerry Brenner's 104th birthday*

Sue Ramser  
*In memory of Frankie Foster*



### Thumbprint

Susan Carter  
Donna Williams  
Lorraine G. Harrison

# Hybridizing, Continued... Ok, So it's NOT That Easy...

By Cheryl Major

Hats are off to hybridizers like Paul Sorano, Irene Fredette, and my mom, Althea Major! While hybridizing has been an exciting journey, it is not for the impatient, nor is it for those who are easily discouraged!

The first iteration was challenging enough. Getting those little tiny seeds to germinate (and not get moldy and damp off!) was, I thought, my biggest hurdle.

I have three seedlings I feel are worth trying for the second generation. I had crossed 'Optimara Texas II' on 'Rob's Willawong' as the seed plant (you can't use an Optimara as seed plant). Partly, I chose these plants because they were blooming and strong, and partly because I thought I would get an interesting mix; maybe a trailer or two?

The results have been pretty mundane which has been disappointing. I've had a lot of single pinks and blues; (mostly semi-minis) and so far, not a trailer in sight! The humid conditions of the

summer were a challenge for a lot of growers, and I was no exception. I had a very tough time getting the leaves to take to grow this second generation.

Finally I have one that's looking good, but the other two... have to start over... again. I've tried wicking soil, wicking soil with the Dixie cup in its own little baggie, leaf in water, leaf in water with paper towel (Eleanor MacIver's favorite tried and true).

Finally, at the last Board meeting, I asked John Cook to bring me some vermiculite. I'll try that method and see how it goes. I seem to remember hearing one of my club's speakers, maybe it was Pat Hancock, saying she rooted leaves in vermiculite. The first generation plants are still there and healthy, so I'll keep on putting down leaves until I get it right!

Hybridizing anyone?

From *Ye Bay Stater*,  
publication of the Bay State AVS

## IMPORTANT NOTICE: SENIOR JUDGES

Senior Judges may apply for a renewal examination between May 1 and September 1, 2013. Send request to Meredith Hall, P. O. Box 370, Marlin, TX 76661. Include check for \$5.00, (payable to AVSA) and proof of three blue ribbons as per AVSA Handbook, 2011 Edition, page 88. Allow three weeks for delivery. **Examinations may be received by attachment using Microsoft Word if requested. Please specify if it will be used as electronic copy or handwritten hard copy. A printed hardcopy (not email) of the exam must be returned to Meredith Hall by October 1, 2013 for grading.**

Those Advanced Judges, who meet the requirements and wish to apply for their first Senior Judge examination, send check for \$5.00 (payable to AVSA) to Mrs. Hall. Also send the following items of documentation of eligibility per AVSA Handbook.

1. List of all judging schools attended, grades, etc.
2. Signed schedules of five AVSA shows judged, (copy of signed title page with all show information is sufficient)
3. Verification of three blue ribbons earned, per AVSA Handbook, 2007 Edition, page 88.

Allow three weeks for delivery. Schedules and cards will be returned if a SASE is included with proper amount of postage. Applications postmarked after September 1, 2012 will be returned and application may be made next year.

**No exams will be returned until after October 15, 2013.** Please include email address and you will be notified of receipt of exam, or include a self addressed postcard and it will be returned upon arrival of exam.

**Meredith Hall**  
m.hall@reagan.com  
254-896-2397

# PowerPoint for African Violet Presentations

By Mary S. Schaeffer

*If you use Word and have the Microsoft Office suite of products on your computer (or for Apple users, Pages, and iWork, or MS Office for Mac) this article is for you. Don't think it is about some fancy technical issues. If it were, I certainly wouldn't be the person writing it. So, please, read on.*

Almost fifteen years ago, a good friend of mine confided that she had recently taught herself PowerPoint and was using it when making professional presentations. Although she didn't mean it this way, it was as though she had thrown down the gauntlet. "I'm at least as smart as she is," I thought. If she could do it so could I. So with great trepidation (which I kept to myself) I embarked on what turned out to be a very short journey and taught myself the basics of PowerPoint.

In our chapter, the vice-president is responsible for arranging speakers for each meeting. When I took on that role and started talking with potential speakers I was surprised to find that not everyone knew how to use PowerPoint. What I eventually realized was that if using PowerPoint was not part of the speakers' professional lives, many had not taken the leap and were not using this incredibly easy-to-use tool. While I am not conversant with Keynote (the Apple equivalent) I suspect it is equally user-friendly.

## Background

PowerPoint is presentation software consisting of a series of slides. It is intended to accompany a talk – not replace it. It permits the speaker to make a greater impact. The old Chinese proverb of a picture being worth 1,000 words is applicable here. You can talk until you are blue in the face trying to explain what a chimera is while a picture makes it crystal clear.

Occasionally, more frequently in a professional setting, speakers attempt to put their entire talk on the slides. This is a terrible idea. In our world,

it is a great mechanism for including pictures of different plants and processes. One of the nice things about Microsoft products (and this is not the forum to debate Apple vs. Microsoft) is that the programs use many of the same commands.

When it comes to PowerPoint, this is especially important, especially the concept of 'copy and paste.' In this article, we'll introduce several new concepts. If you are not familiar with them, open up PowerPoint (it's part of the Office suite) and start playing around until you are comfortable with the concept. It is the only way to learn.

So, to recap, PowerPoint is a series of slides meant to accompany a lecture to reinforce the points made during the presentation.

## Text Boxes: Basic Differentiating Concept

For me anyway, the one concept that was totally alien was that of text boxes. It's not difficult; it was just something I hadn't encountered before PowerPoint. A text box is a box on your slide designed to hold text. When you are working on a PowerPoint presentation, the slide may already have a text box. You'll know this because it is delineated with dotted lines. Exhibit 3 shows what a text box looks like. If it doesn't have one, you need to insert one. Simply click on the insert tab on the top of your PowerPoint screen. You'll get a whole bunch of options and select 'text box.'

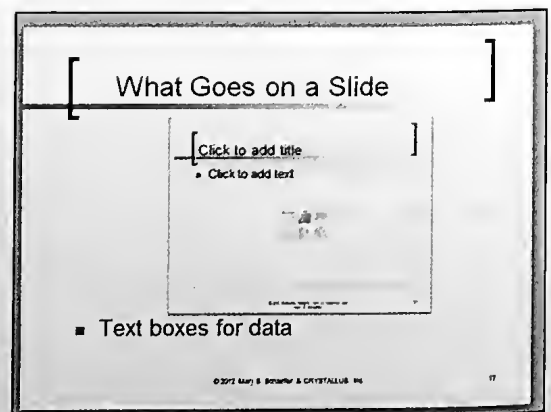
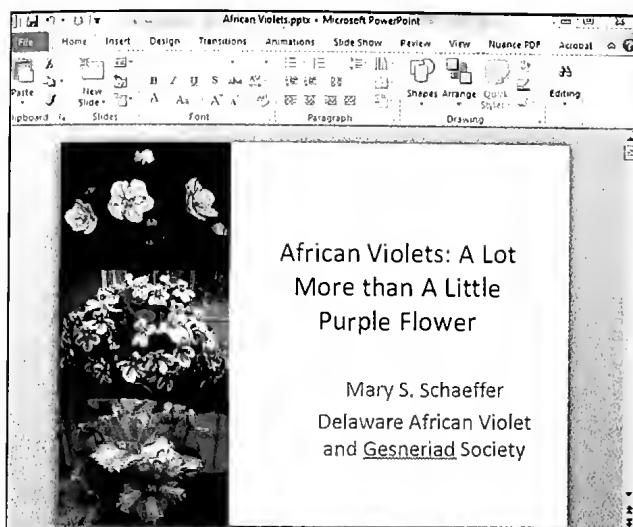


Exhibit 3

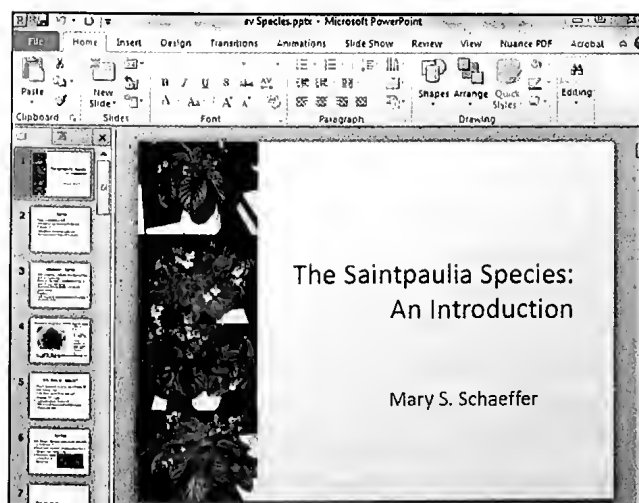
Sometimes when you copy and paste a bit of text (especially from a Word document) the text box will be automatically inserted. In fact, sometimes you may end up with more than one text box and it is best (although not necessary) if you delete the one not being used.

### Putting Together Your First PowerPoint

As noted earlier, your PowerPoint presentation is a series of slides. The first page, or title page, typically will be formatted slightly different than the ensuing slides. You can see two examples of title pages in exhibits 1 and 2.



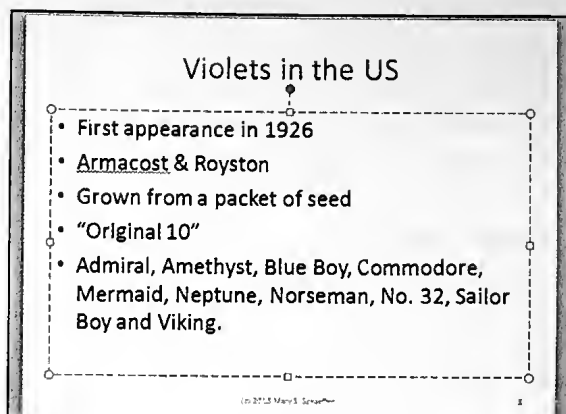
**Exhibit 1**



**Exhibit 2**

The remaining slides can be formatted in a variety of ways but the most common is shown in exhibit 3. In this case, each slide has two text

boxes, a title at the top and then a box for your commentary. This should be a series of bullet points that you will elaborate on in your talk. See exhibit 4 for an example.



**Exhibit 4**

When you have all your information that you want on one slide, insert another slide. Keep going until your talk is finished. And, make sure you include pictures. They can be handled in one of two ways. You can either click on the picture and paste it into your presentation or use the insert picture command. Don't forget to give appropriate credit for the photo, if you can.

Sometimes your photo will not end up exactly where you want it. Simply right click on it and drag it to the location you want. Is it too big or small? Left click on it and change one of the dimensions. The other dimension will adjust. And finally, do you only want a small part of the picture in your presentation? Left click on the picture and use the crop tool.

After you finish your presentation, you may want to move slides around. Put your presentation in the Normal view and drag and drop slides at will. If you need to add a new slide, using the Normal view, place your cursor at the spot where you want a new slide, and hit 'new slide.'

I realize the last few paragraphs contained a lot of information. Don't be intimidated. Try the tactics one at a time – or only use a few.

With each new presentation you put together, your confidence will improve.

I have one last comment about photos in your



presentations. Ideally if you are giving a talk you will e-mail your presentation ahead of time so the sponsor can have it loaded on their computer ready to go when you arrive. That's one less detail for you to worry about. However, if you use very high-resolution photos, your presentation may be too big to email. In that case, you'll either have to bring your own computer or bring your presentation on a key (USB port).

### Closing Thoughts

PowerPoint is a powerful tool. But that is all it is. It cannot replace a great talk. That is all in your hands. If you do demos as part of your talks, don't stop. There's nothing like seeing someone

perform a task to bring home a point. There's also nothing like seeing a live plant. But often our plants don't cooperate; they aren't in bloom or looking good when we are scheduled to give a talk. There is also a limit to how many plants you can drag to a talk. But, with PowerPoint, you can show many more than you can comfortably carry. That's where the tool really adds value.

I've put together well over 100 PowerPoint presentations since my rather unpretentious start. They may not be loaded with bells and whistles, but they do the job. There's no doubt in my mind that you can do the same. So, what's holding you back? To steal a line from a great advertising campaign, just do it!

---

## The Power of Plants

By Cindy Brooks

We all know houseplants are pretty to look at, but did you know they offer health and wellness benefits as well? Having houseplants can help you live a more healthy and happy life. Plants can be calming, and provide a lovely distraction during times of stress or tension. Studies show that plants are effective in helping recover from illness and actually can speed recovery time. Plants contribute to a feeling of well-being and comfort that benefit everyone's daily life.

Houseplants have the power to make us feel better just by the simple act of enjoying the sight of something beautiful. Plants have a positive influence on people. We respond positively to green plants and colorful flowers. Caring for plants inspires hope. People caring for plants learn responsibility and experience hopeful and nurturing feelings.

Because we spend so much time indoors, due to work, taking care of children, etc., we often miss out on the serenity that greenery and colorful flowers can bring to our lives. By having plants indoors, we can access the relaxing benefits of the outdoors brought inside. Caring for a living thing can help when you're depressed and lonely, giving you a purpose in life. Houseplants can contribute to a feeling of wellbeing, making you calmer and more optimistic. Having plants to love and nurture gives us something to take care of (that can't talk back), which can enrich our lives.

People with plants in their homes have less stress, and plants have been known to contribute to lower blood pressure. Indoor plants have been shown to reduce cold-related illnesses by more than 30%. This is due to their effect of increasing humidity levels and decreasing dust. Plants absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen as part of the photosynthesis process. They can help clean the air by filtering out gases and other household pollutants. In a 1989 NASA Clean Air Study it was determined that approximately 15 to 18 houseplants (planted in six- to eight-inch containers) would improve the air quality in an average 1,800-squarefoot home.

Enhance your brain power with African violets. Gazing at flowering plants in the purple family, like African violets, stimulates the release of adrenaline. This energizing hormone improves creativity. Purple also triggers the release of endorphins, which ease stress and improve mood. Another perk: The body responds to flowering plants of any color by boosting oxygen flow to the brain, resulting in relaxation.

African violets promote spirituality and peaceful vibrations.

From *Ye Bay Stater*,  
publication of the Bay State AVS

# Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

A name reservation costs \$1.00 (\$5.00 for non-members) for each plant, and is valid for two years, after which time it may be extended two years for an additional \$1.00 (\$5.00 for non-members). Registration of the plant is \$5.00 (\$25.00 for non-members) unless completed within the reservation period, in which case the balance is \$4.00 (\$20.00 for non-members).



**Variegated** dark green, pink and cream, glossy, wavy, serrated. **Large** 'Buckeye Sea Breezes' (10570) 11/13/2012 (P. Hancock) Double pale blue star/variable white fantasy. **Variegated** dark green, pink and cream, plain, glossy, serrated. **Large**

\*\*\*\*\*

Pat Hancock – Middletown, OH

'Buckeye Cinema Star' (10568) 11/13/2012 (P. Hancock) Single-semidouble light purple ruffled star/darker fantasy. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, plain, glossy, serrated. **Large**

'Buckeye Magic Touch' (10569) 11/13/2012 (P. Hancock) Single-semidouble rose large ruffled star/darker overlay, dark raspberry edge.

Dolores Harrington – Fridley, MN

'Dolores' Ruth Elizabeth' (10569) 11/16/2012 (D. Harrington) Single pink sticktite single/darker eye, ruffled white edge. Medium-dark green, quilted, serrated. **Standard**

## REGISTRATION CHANGE

The following description has been changed at the request of the hybridizer:

'Jersey Lilacs' (9818) Change from **Miniature** to **Semiminiature**



## Luncheon Auction

Edna Rourke

99 Old Stratford Road

Shelton, CT 06484-6129

(203) 926-9716, Email: Apapillon@aol.com

Let's make this auction the biggest, best and most successful ever! Remember, we're going to be in Texas! I'm sure with your help it will happen. As you know, the money raised is used to benefit all of AVSA.

To all of our members, affiliates, hybridizers and commercials, I hope you'll consider donating a violet-related, or craft to this coming auction. Donations of supplies, or newly introduced plants

or cuttings, would also be very much appreciated.

As always, your help will insure the success of this auction. All donations and contributors will be acknowledged in the AVM. *Don't forget, you must attend the luncheon in order to attend the auction.* Won't you join us?

Please give me a call, or email, to let me know if you will be donating items. I look forward to hearing from you! See you in Austin!

# Small Talk

By Laurel D. Goretsky

32 Scimitar Point N.W. • Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Email: Laurel@Goretsky.ca

I am beginning to long for spring. I am also excited that the AVSA convention in Austin, Texas is getting closer.

As many of you know, my husband is Winston Goretsky (AVSA photographer, Master Judge, and judging school teacher). With two people sharing a plant room, you can imagine that we have a lot of plants in various stages of growth. I have my plants, of course, that I groom, etc. and he has his. However, when it comes to leaf trays and potted up baby plants, it is whoever has the time to work on them. I must give credit to Winston for the initial idea for this column and also the pictures.

When you purchase or receive a plant, it is always a good idea to pot a leaf of it. After we returned from the convention in Detroit, leaf trays (individual pots or 'cells' filled with a mix of vermiculite, perlite and fine charcoal) were put together and a leaf was taken from each of the plants (except chimeras) and started in a leaf tray (don't forget to label!). After a few months, the leaf trays were full of baby plants. Winston happened to be the one to have the time to pot up the baby plants. Finally, I am getting to the actual topic of this column – Overcrowded Plant Trays!



could I even think about throwing any of them away?' I can't be too hard on Winston because I probably would have done the same.

Overcrowding is not recommended for a few reasons. One reason to avoid overcrowding of plants is that if one has a disease or bugs, etc., all the plants surrounding are subjected to the same problems. Another reason to not overcrowd your violets is that plants pushed together will develop distorted leaf habits as they fight each other to get the most light. Finally, overcrowded violets are much harder to water, so make sure that you are not damaging leaves, blossoms, etc. Also, when I examined the overcrowded trays that are shown in the included pictures, I noticed some of the plants were quite dry where others were wet. In other words, some of the plants are being over-watered and others under-watered.



To quote Winston from a recent note in our club newsletter, 'There were all sorts of new varieties and some I hadn't grown before; I thought it was a good idea to start as many as I could. How



All is not lost with these overcrowded trays that are in our plant room. If we act now, we may have some nice violets for upcoming shows. The trays happen to have a delightful selection of miniatures and semi miniatures to choose from.

I discovered 'Flashy Trail', 'Amadie Trail', 'Rob's Dodo Bird', and 'Mac's Kup O' Kindness' (picture of blossom), and 'Sultan' to name only some of the plants in the two trays.

The first step will be for Winston and I to pick

the plants we want to grow on our own. Once I have, I will do any grooming necessary, or repotting, and then label with the plant name and my initials to avoid confusion.

There will still be lots of plants left. Our local club meetings have a Sales Table where members can bring plants and cuttings to sell. A portion of the sales then go to



*Mac's Cup O Kindness*

the club. Another idea is to donate plants to a willing, local senior's home. Or, I could take them to a school and give them to the students.

Yay! That takes care of two trays in our plant room. What do I do with the rest? I guess that is a thought for another time.

Happy growing to you all!



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Codonanthe devosiana 'Paula'*

*Exhibited by: Paul Sorano*

## For Beginners

By Cheryl Salatino

14 Maple Avenue • Sudbury, MA 01776  
Email: [cheryl@dancingshadowsdesign.com](mailto:cheryl@dancingshadowsdesign.com)

# Managing Change in Your Collection and Environment

## *Coping with Fluctuation*

Here's a common theme that keeps popping up when I speak with growers beginning growers to expand their African violet collection. It goes something like this: "When I had only a few African violets, my plants appeared healthy and bloomed all the time. Now that I have added new varieties to my collection, I seem to have lost my green thumb."

How many of us can identify with that sentiment? Of course, we've all been through it. Some folks chalk it up to information overload, believing their new knowledge would turn plants into super performers. Instead, the reverse is happening. I call this *black thumbitis* – a temporary condition that is remedied by assessing your environment and learning to practice moderation. Sound scary? Not at all.

### Moderation

Let's start with the idea of expanding the collection. There should be no argument that more plants to water and groom will change the way we handle routine care. Easier said, than recognized. If plant care has always been accomplished quickly, we often forget that *more* plants increase the time commitment required. When more time is not made available, we either shortcut our tasks or lose our awareness of changes beginning to occur in our plants.

Adding slowly to a collection (a.k.a. moderation) can ease that burden. Keeping our excitement in check is often hard to do when there are so many wonderful varieties to try. So true. However, slowing down our obsession allows us to make necessary adjustments to the growing area to accommodate new arrivals.



### Environment Change

As a new grower, we quickly learn that a little tender loving care can yield great reward. Paying attention and providing basic needs on a regular basis quickly produces happier plants – with blossoms popping with color. As noted, trouble usually begins when the collection increases.

Here is another way to provide control. Manage change. Much like people – African violets don't like change. *Consistency* is the hidden secret – the missing ingredient – a fundamental must-have. Remember, our environment often works against consistency, unless we work hard to maintain it. As we know, there are many factors that contribute to healthy plants. Take a few moments to determine if a lack of consistency may be contributing to plant concerns.

### Growing Area Pains

Now that the collection has increased, your growing area has probably expanded or moved. Carefully examine the size of the area dedicated to growing, as well as any changes from the previous conditions. Simple things happen without notice. Often new plants are wedged in when small. As they grow, crowded conditions limit the air circulation and their space to expand in size. The first few African violets probably didn't have to compete for space – or your attention.

### Seasonal Fluctuation

No matter where you hail from, the four seasons guarantee we're in for change – and some 'un-seasonal' weather fluctuations. This global



warming thing is credited with playing havoc with our weather. Regardless of what's causing these extremes, many parts of the world are experiencing conditions never seen before. And, it's those weather changes that impact our indoor plants. Somehow, plants just know what's going on both inside and out – and they react.

## Light

The optimal amount of light needed to grow healthy, blooming plants is typically 8 to 12 hours a day under artificial lighting - depending upon the type of grow lights in use. Natural daylight can also be a factor if your stands are located in rooms with windows. As the angle of the sun changes during each season, the amount of natural light will vary. You may need to make modifications in the artificial light to accommodate for natural light fluctuation. Of course, each plant also has unique light requirements, so watch its growth patterns to see if the placement on the shelf is ideal. Stronger light intensity occurs at the center of a bulb, and the light weakens towards the ends.

When growing in windows, a southern exposure typically offers too much light, while a northern exposure offers too little. Remember to protect your plants from direct sun – African violets want bright light without the hot rays. That said, a south-facing window filtered from the direct sun (e.g. using a sheer curtain) may be a very good choice, especially during the winter months.

## Temperature

African violets like similar living conditions as most people – temperatures around 70 degrees. Winters and summers really impact our ability to maintain comfortable temps (at an affordable price) in most parts of the world. Consider alternatives in the growing area to minimize dramatic seasonal changes. Fans, cloth or plastic shelf covers, and heaters are just some of the options available to alter conditions. Be creative. And, don't forget to assess the amount of humidity available during each season. African violets thrive in a wide range from 40% to 70%. If you're comfortable, it's likely the plants will be

too. If it's too dry – try capillary mats, a humidifier, or add pebbles and water to the bottom of the trays. Remember, extremes in either of these areas can have a negative effect on growth and blooming.

The most temperature volatility can be found in window growing conditions. Be aware of temperature changes in your environment at various times during the course of a day. It is important to keep temperatures from fluctuating more than 10 degrees between morning and evening hours. If you find small beads of moisture on the early morning foliage, temperature changes may be producing these droplets. Left alone, this moisture can leave marks or spots on the foliage.

During the colder months, drafts often cause a variety of growth problems. If you can feel a cool breeze seeping through the edges of the window, move the plants away from the area. When space is tight, place a piece of an old mattress pad on the sill to block the breeze and provide a warmer base for the pots to sit upon.

## Water and Fertilizer

Constant moisture is recommended for African violets – not too dry and not too wet. Drown and drought conditions are a quick way to introduce problems and demonstrate a break in the culture of a plant. Regular application of fertilizer is critical to producing performing plants. Learn about adding the right level of fertilizer to achieve a continuous feeding program.

Remember, the temperature of the water also plays a role here. Tepid water is preferred. Often we leave water containers out overnight to allow chlorine to dissipate. During the cooler months, check to see if water in those containers has become too cold for the plants. Cold water can produce leaf spotting, curling of foliage, and slow down root and plant growth.

Once you've reviewed the fundamentals of managing change in your environment, take a closer look at the routine care you are able to give to your collection. Consistency in all areas of plant care really makes a difference. *Black thumbitis* is easy to eradicate.

***Grow Smart, Grow Well.***



# 2012 AVS of Philadelphia Show Surprise

Article and Photos by Neil Lipson



*Lindi Wurzer, Best in Show Winner*



*Rob's Cool Fruit, Best in Show*

On October 13, 2012, the AVS of Philadelphia had a top-notch show. There were over eighty-eight entries. What was most interesting was that the top winner was Lindi Wurzer, who had *never entered* an African violet show before! This was her first show, and she won Best in Show, 2nd Best in Show, Best Variegate, Tricolor rosette, miniature, fantasy, semiminia-  
ture, and many other awards.

Winning Best in Show on your first show is not a common occurrence in these competitions, but has occurred with a few other growers including Paula Bal from the Garden State Club in New Jersey some years ago, and Karen Dirzuweit from the AVSP



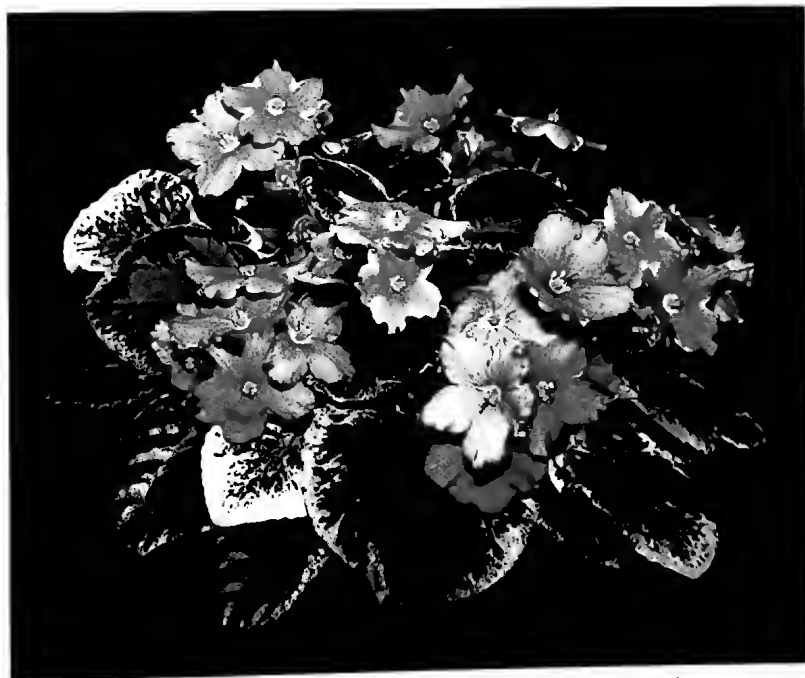
*Plumberry Glow, grown by Lindi Wurzer*

Philadelphia club three years ago, among others.

I had the pleasure and privilege to do the photography for this show, which was held at Cathedral Village in Philadelphia, PA. Their website is <http://www.phillyviolets.org/> and they can also be found on Facebook under African Violet Society of Philadelphia. My photographs for this show are in their Facebook page for all to see.



*Lil Runaround, grown by Carol Hastings*



*Ma's Moody Monday, grown by Judy Smith*

# "And the winners are ..."

By Mary J. Corondan

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**AVC OF GREATER KANSAS CITY, MO – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Mindi Brooke, Funambule, Wrangler's Green Pastures; Best Standard: Mindi Brooke; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Mary Ann Bjorgaard**. 2nd Best AVSA Collection: LC's Raspberry Whisper, Optimara Alabama II, Optimara Ontario; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Penguin Suit, Rob's Plaid Skirt, Rob's Combustible Pigeon; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Rob's Combustible Pigeon; Best Miniature: Little Miss Muffett; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Lynn Canning**. Best Trailer: Cirelda, **Doris Brown**. Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'California Sunset', **Patricia Inbody**.

**AV COUNCIL OF FLORIDA, FL – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ness' Midnight Fantasy, Kris, Buckeye Colossal, **Sharon Gartner**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Plumberry Glow, Boo Man, Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Vertigo', **Christel Collier**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Precious Red, Shirl's Hawaiian Lei, Pink Dove; Best Semiminiature: Thunder Surprise, **Cheryl Stevens**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Rainbow's Quiet Riot, **Bobbi Johannsen**. Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet, **Daniela Wyatt**. Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Mary Lou Harden**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia confusa*, **Carrie O'Daniel**. Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Elvie Blakely**. Design Sweepstakes, **Cheryl Luna**.

**AVS OF PHILADELPHIA, PA – Winners:** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Green Dragon, Plumberry Glow, Rob's Cool Fruit; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Rob's Cool Fruit; Best Miniature: Rob's Bunny Hop; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Linda Wurzer**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Lollipop Kid, Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Rob's Fiddle Faddle, **Phyllis Haggerty**. Best Standard: Chicago Flair; Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Tinkerbells', **Betsy Branson**. Best



Trailer: Lil Runaround, **Carol Hastings**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone *ionantha* Mather No. 20, **Susan Hanna**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Judith Smith**.

**CEDAR VALLEY AVC, IA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Annabelle, Tatanka, Candy Swirls; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina dryas* 'Hisako'; Best Design, **Carol Tjaden**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Gizmo, Jolly Maiden, Rob's Slap Happy; Best in Show/Best Standard: Annabelle; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Maiden; Best Miniature: Aly's Blizzard Bunny, **Jan Tyler-Blanchard**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Woolloomooloo, Yesterday's Garland, Cirelda; Best Trailer: Yesterday's Garland, **Elaine Schnell**. Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Ginny Platte**. Design Sweepstakes, **Catherine Thompson**.

**LONE STAR AV COUNCIL, TX – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Candy Kisses, Buckeye Especially Mine, Jersey Snow Flakes; Best Standard: Jersey Snow Flakes; Best Miniature: Kentucky Baby Bells, **Richard Nicholas**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Greg, Ness' Bangle Blue, Rhapsodie Michelle II; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Kitten Caboodle, Rob's Pink Buttercups, Rob's Combustible Pigeon, **Mary Corondan**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Mischief, Jolly Frills, Shirl's Snow Cone; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Jolly Mischief, **Anne Nicholas**. Best Trailer: Fun Trail, **Meredith Hall**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subspecies *velutina*, **Alcie Maxwell**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Strawberry Patch', **Suzanne Roberts**. Best Design, **Ruth Goeke**. Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Ken Froboese**. Design Sweepstakes, **Jane Rexilius**.

**METROPOLITAN ST. LOUIS AV COUNCIL, MO – Winners:** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jazz Bouquet, Rob's Zipper Zapper, Jersey Jazz;

Best in Show/Best Miniature: Persian Prince; Best Standard: Heinz's Good Vibrations; Best Semi-miniature: Honey Pink; Best Trailer: Darling Blue Trail; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Susan Hapner**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone House of Amani, **Bonnie Russom**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* USBRG 98-083, **Gary Dunlap**. Best Design, **Fran Russom**. Design Sweepstakes, **Pat Dunlap**.

**MID-ATLANTIC AVS, VA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Amour Elite, Kostina Fantazia, Psychedelic Moon, **Rodney Barnett**; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Orchid, Rob's Chilly Willy, Persian Prince; Best Semi-miniature: Rob's Dodo Bird; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Trailer: Deer Trailer; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Targa'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Linda Abplanalp**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Whiz Band, Rob's Bunny Hop, Rob's June Bug, **Ralph Robinson**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, **David Dick**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone *tongwensis*, **Kitty Hedgepeth**. Best Design, **Barbara Stewart**. Design Sweepstakes, **Sharon Long**.

**MISSOURI VALLEY AV COUNCIL, OK – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Sun-coast Lavender Silk, Ma's Easter Parade, Harbor Blue; Best in Show/Best Standard: Ma's Easter Parade; Best Trailer: Pony Ride; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Carol Rice**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Antique Rose, Blueberry Sprite, Pink Pussycat, **Adrienne Rieck**. Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy; Best Design, **B. J. Ohme**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Pink Puff; **Catherine Thompson**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* 'Silver', **Tena Painter**. Design Sweepstakes, **Elmer Godeny**.

**NEW YORK STATE AVS, NY – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rosie Ruffles, Tomahawk, Bob Serbin, **Robin Yager**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's June Bug, Rob's Bunny Hop, Rob's Jitterbug, **Ralph Robinson**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Heaven's Smile, Rob's Argyle Socks, Rob's Mister Sneezzy; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Rob's Jitterbug, Design Sweepstakes, **Carolyn Klein**. Best Standard:

Smokey Moon, **Margaret Califano**. Best Semi-miniature: Mac's Misty Meadow, **Doris Brownlie**. Best Trailer: Cherokee Trail; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus candidus* 'Wahroonga'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Paul Kroll**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5a clone *grandifolia* #237, **Heidi Dillenbeck**. Best Design, **Julie Thompson**.

**NUTMEG STATE AVS, CT – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Aquarius, Optimara Chico, Optimara Kansas; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Little Ebony, Sassy Sister, Midnight Rascal; Best Standard: Rainbow's Quiet Riot; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Alford Sharpe'; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Edna Rourke**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Precious Pink, Rob's Heat Wave, Heritage Frolic; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Precious Pink; Best Trailer: Rob's Galiwinku, **Lynn Wallach**.

**SOUTH COAST AVS, CA – Winners:** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Texas Space Dust, Everdina, Windsome; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Everdina; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Suicidal Squirrel; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Hans Inpijn**. Best Trailer: Chantaspring, **Joan Wood**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Unpredictable Helen', **Leonard Re**. Best Design, **Jacquie Eisenhut**. Design Sweepstakes, **Elaine Re**.

**THOUSAND OAKS AVS, CA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Chico, Optimara Trinidad, Optimara Cha Cha; Best Standard: Optimara Trinidad; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Leslie Cox**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Sierra Sunrise, Old-fashioned Rose, Gum Drop; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Gum Drop; Best Miniature: Precious Red; Best Trailer: Rob's Willawong; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Gay Wilson**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* subspecies *ionantha* var. *ionantha*, **Lyndell Wong**. Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Fleischel's Targa', **Luis Pineda**.

**WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF AFRICAN VIOLETS, WI – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Funambule, Ma's Soiree, Ness' Viking Maiden; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone House of Amani; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'The King'; Best Design, **Arlene Garvens**. 2nd

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Live Wire, Ma's Wicked Witch, Optimara California II; Best in Show/Best Standard: Yukako, **Kevin Degner**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Eternal Orbit, Jolly Mischief; Best Semi-miniature: Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Trailer:

Foxwood Trail, **Nancy Braun**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Persian Prince, Rob's Bad Bunny, Optimara Rose Quartz; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Ruth Mengsol**. Best Miniature: Rob's Twinkle Blue, **Cathy Heider**. Design Sweepstakes, **Doug Kindschuh**.

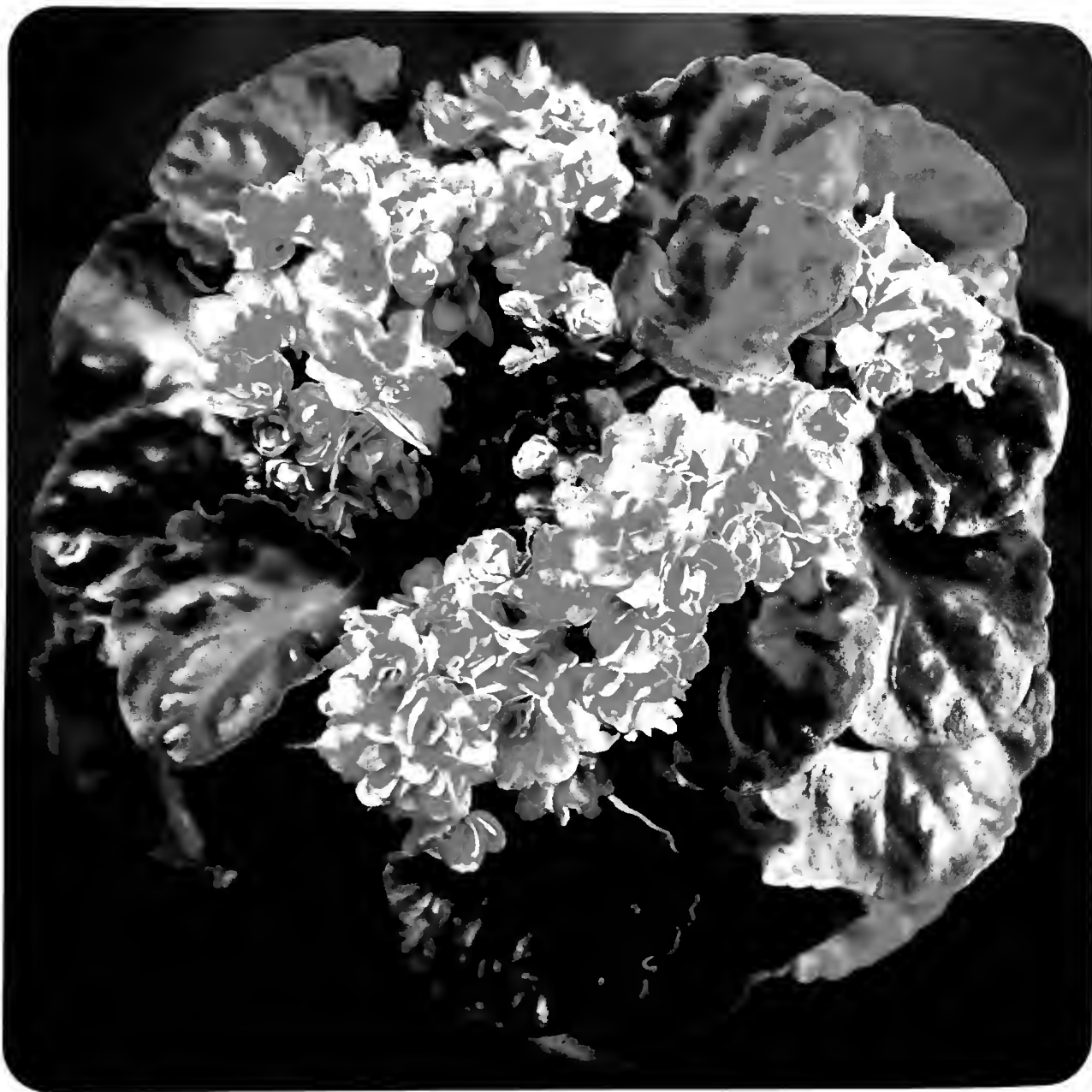


Photo Credit: **Alcie Maxwell**

## ***My Fair Lady***

*Exhibited by: **Alcie Maxwell***

*Hybridized by: **Eyerdorn***

*Standard*



# Why I Like Standard African Violet Show Plants

By Mary Martin

I grow plants for show, and in particular, standard varieties because they are my favorites. I think standards are the most difficult to make show-worthy because they are not as forgiving as miniatures, and trailers don't mind at all if you happen to take off the wrong leaf. Culture problems are usually more obvious in standards, and they take up much more space on your shelves. Plus, it is certainly not fun packing them up for shows. Despite all these challenges, I don't think any plant is lovelier than a well-grown standard African violet.

**Growing Setup.** For the last few years, I've attended workshops given by well-known growers, and the programs always begin with a slide or pictures showing a beautiful plant room. It seems all these growers have dedicated plant rooms that could double for operating rooms they are so sterile. I lust after their rows of lighted shelves with neatly arranged, beautiful, well-behaved plants. And most of these rooms have lots of windows, a lake, or beautiful scenery in the background. It's obvious that these growers either never spill soil or else they clean their shelves every single day. Also, their supplies are neatly arranged with everything properly labeled and in its appropriate place. Also, these successful growers must all have a scientific background because they toss around terms such as "pH" factor, "capillary action," and "reverse osmosis" as if they use them in everyday conversation.

My eyes always glazed over in science class, and my growing area leaves much to be desired. I grow in the basement. I have two, three-shelf carts and one, four-shelf unit in what I call "my plant room" and a four foot fixture in another area of the basement, which I use when I have new plants I want to quarantine or when my plant shelves are overflowing due to upcoming shows or plant sales. The plant room measures 7-1/2' x 14-1/4'. All four walls of this area are covered with six-ply plastic

stapled in place to the rafters. Duct tape is used liberally. In addition to the lighted carts, this room has a vaporizer, a timer that controls all the lights, a box fan, and an electric heater. I also have a thermometer showing temperature and humidity level. The fan runs continuously; timer for the lights is usually set for 12 hours per day. Most of my shelves have the old fashion T12 bulbs, but I have some with T8's. There is nothing attractive about it, but the room seems to work for me. Before we put up the plastic walls, the growing area was always too cold. Outside the plant room, I have shelves, and I must say, my pots are usually lined up neatly, and there are two tables where I repot and groom plants. One of these is my dogs' grooming table. I have a double-sink laundry or utility tub for washing plants, pots, and trays. While this set up is very primitive, I like it because I can control the temps and humidity in the plastic room and don't have to worry when I tip a plant or spill soil all over the floor, which is frequent. I wish I had a larger work area and a more efficient space, but one must use what one has.

**I'm Thirsty, I'm Hungry.** All my plants are wicked and set on their individual reservoirs. I am not a fan of mat watering because I worry about spreading diseases. Once in a while, I mat water, but plants in that setup are always young ones I started from leaves, and they are awaiting a plant sale or just being observed as to whether they deserve their own reservoirs. My normal fertilizer is Jack's 20-20-20. I've been experimenting with adding the equivalent of a fish stick to the pots of green foliage standards and also to trailers. I use City of Columbus water but never straight from the tap. I add 1/4 tsp Jack's 20-20-20 to the water. I know some growers cut back on fertilizer amounts in the summer, but I find I get just as hungry in the summer as in the winter and figure my plants do too.

People are always asking what I do to produce



show plants or do I have some secret ingredient that I'm not telling anyone about. I wish I knew of an extraordinary product that would produce show plants without my having to exert much effort.

Successful growing techniques haven't changed much through the years. The fundamentals to growing prize-winning standards are:

1. **Pick varieties that win.** We all like to try the latest varieties with their exotic blooms, but it's good to grow proven varieties also. The easiest way to find these is go to African violet shows, read what plants are winning in the "And the Winners Are..." column in the AV Magazine, and "Tally Time," the yearly summary which lists the plants receiving the greatest number of awards in AVSA shows. If these articles don't give you enough clues, then look at the Best Varieties list published yearly. These plants are chosen by fellow members of AVSA, and why do you think these plants are so popular? It's because they are easy to grow and transform into successful show plants.

Consider adding some of the "vintage violets" to your collection. While perhaps their blooms aren't as exciting as the newer varieties, they often have beautiful foliage and grow into beautiful show plants.

When I first started growing African violets, I believed that any plant could become a show plant, rather like Cinderella turning into a princess. That is not true, however. Sparkles, spots, and edges don't make a show plant. Judges are looking for symmetrical foliage, good blossom count, and plants that grow true to the hybridizer's description.

2. **Are you a hoarder?** Get rid of plants that are underperforming for you. I know growers who can't throw away anything. They keep every sucker and put down every broken leaf. They try to nurse sick plants back to health. Get over it! Use birth control in your plant room. How many plants of one variety do you really need? If a plant is ailing, chances are that it will never be show quality and, worse yet, it may infect your healthy plants.
3. **Keep your plants disbudded.** I allow my

plants to bloom once to be sure they are true to description. Then they only bloom when a show is approaching. That's another reason I like nice foliage. Since I don't see many flowers, I appreciate beautiful leaves. I can identify most of my plants by just looking at the foliage. Here are my reasons for not allowing plants to bloom. Blooms attract thrips, and thrips are trouble, as we all know. Also, I want my plants to put all their efforts into producing good foliage. Heavy bloom distorts the centers and causes leaves to get disarranged unless you are diligent about pulling the stems up between the leaves. My plants bloomed so heavily last spring that some of them could hardly hold up all the weight. When I took the blooms off after the Columbus show, I found some of my centers looked really bad, with small leaves that were misshapen from so many blossoms. Some of my plants took months to recuperate.

4. **Newly-purchased plants must conform!**

Don't take them home and let them sit on top of the television or on the coffee table wearing their cellophane wrappers, waiting for attention. Within a week of purchase, mine are repotted, wicked, and placed on reservoirs in my quarantine area. I know some growers say that you shouldn't repot right away; that the plants have probably been repotted recently anyway and it's better to wait. My theory is that the new plant is now a resident of my house and the sooner it gets use to my growing conditions, the better. That doesn't mean it needs to be placed in a larger pot, just in the soil mix that I am currently using. Often, the young plant is too large for a solo cup but not ready to move up into a 5" squatty or pan pot, I move young standards into clear, nine-ounce drinking cups that I purchase at Kroger or Walmart. I favor these cups for several reasons: they are very durable, meaning I can wash and reuse them; it is easy to put holes in them for drainage and wicks, I can identify young standards readily on my shelves, and I can keep an eye on root formation. The main reason I like them is they seem to be just the right size for young standards; slightly flared and squatty.

5. **Is your soil working for you?** Then you probably shouldn't change it. At the AVSA convention in Detroit, guests were delighted to find in the goody bag a slick little "recipe book" of soil mixes that are used by prominent African violet growers. I love to try new recipes, but I spend a lot of time hunting for brands or ingredients that are not in my local garden center. When I first started this hobby, my mentor and lots of other members of the Columbus club were using 3 parts Stim-U-Plant potting soil which was available at the local grocery, 2 parts perlite, and 1 part vermiculite. These members grew beautiful plants. Eventually, I decided to switch to Volkmann Brothers African violet mix for wicking, and to that I added perlite. That was probably my favorite mix, but I can't find it any more. Now I just switch around. The latest batch I made consisted of one part Baccto, 3 parts Promix; a bag of Arcadia wicking soil from the greenhouse people in the salesroom, horticultural charcoal, red lava rock, and enough perlite to make my soil very loose. And guess what – even though it felt "right" when I mixed it, it was still too heavy. Mixing the soil is like mixing pie dough: it just has to have the right feel. Why did I choose this combination? Because it's what I had available at the time. Why the red lava rock? In 2002 I read a brief article in the AV Magazine written by Pat Hancock. Pat talked about Kent Stork and a problem he had with lower leaf yellowing. Kent sent samples to a laboratory, and they reported his plants had a calcium deficiency. They recommended adding gypsum to the potting soil. Kent did and saw a definite improvement with only a few weeks. Pat tried it too and said she also noticed her plant foliage had a healthy color. I felt that if it was good enough for Kent and good enough for Pat, I would try it. I'm not sure how much this helps; I still have a few plants that insist on haloing, but in general my foliage is very green and shiny.

Did you notice that I don't add vermiculite to

my soil mix? Keep in mind that I am not a scientific person, and I never could figure out why we add vermiculite and perlite, which seem to have opposite functions.

6. **Repot often.** I don't think it really makes a whole lot of difference as to what concoctions you add to your soil mix. I repot probably four times a year. The plants love it. I don't want my plants to sit in their pots wearing long necks or, worse yet, be planted too deep in the pot because that prevents the centers from developing correctly. Frequent repotting gives me the perfect opportunity to check for hidden suckers and helps keep the pH to ideal levels. While I do test my soil mix's pH, I am not sure if my meter is accurate, and I believe that frequent repotting is a good backup plan to controlling the acid level of the soil.
7. **Keep your growing area clean!** No one enjoys working in a messy room, with dirty pots piled up and soil all over the table and shelves. A neat growing area makes a grower more disposed to spending time with his plants and also aids in disease prevention.
8. **Read and study!** The *African Violet Magazine* and the Ohio State *Violet Connection* offer wonderful articles on growing show plants. All serious growers should have a copy of the AVSA's publication: *Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges* or as it is commonly called, "the Judges' Handbook." The book which inspired me the most in my early growing days was *Growing to Show* by Pauline Bartholomew. It is still available from AVSA.
9. **Consistency – the Key to Success!** It doesn't matter if you grow the best show varieties ever hybridized; use the best soil mix ever discovered; have the most beautiful and ideal growing conditions ever created; you won't have blue ribbon winners if you don't give your plants regular care.

From *The Violet Connection*,  
Publication of the Ohio State AVS



# Lighting Basics – Part 2

## GRO-LUX Lamps, T-5's and more

By Neil Lipson

Because I received such a strong response to my first article on Lighting Basics, I decided to move up the schedule of Part 2. This article will be on what lamps to use and in what combinations. I ran into a few surprises myself on my quest to find the right answers. If

you would like to skip the details, you can go right down to the conclusion.

### GRO-LUX lamps

For over twenty years, I have used one F40CW 4-foot lamp along with one GRO-LUX lamp. I only standardize on 4-foot T-12 lamps; they are the best and most efficient and allow mixing two kinds of lamps. This particular growing lamp is made by Sylvania and is much easier to find than other lamps, such as the Verilux, which works fine, but are more expensive and not found as easily as GRO-LUX. Verilux on amazon.com is \$19, while the GRO-LUX is \$8. Given that the grower is trying to keep costs down, I always include these options.

Sylvania makes two different GRO-LUX lamps, the F40T12/GRO/AQ and the F40T12/GRO/AQ/WS. Which to use in a 2-lamp fixture? Look at the diagram shown below. Now, why is red important (the red is about 650 nanometers)? That causes blooming! This lamp gives a big “kick” to the photosynthesis end of the spectral curve. I posted this question on Facebook in the African Violet Nerd posting, which has over 700 members, and their answers were as follows: If they HAD to use only one of the GRO-LUX, they would choose the



*Plants under Gro-Lux lamps*

F40T12/GRO/AQ, not the wide spectrum. Most of them, however, used one of each or equivalents (like one warm and one cool).

When I asked Sylvania about which lamp to use for African violets, they said:

*“SYLVANIA's GRO-LUX Aquarium & GRO-LUX Aquarium*

*Wide Spectrum fluorescent lamps provide essential energy for use in indoor gardening applications. The GRO-LUX Aquarium lamps provide the right balance of red and blue wavelengths for low-energy plants such as house plants requiring indirect sunlight. In contrast, the Wide Spectrum lamps are the preferred selection for plants requiring full sunlight. A 50/50 mix of each lamp creates the perfect environment for high-energy plants, such as vegetables, that require more energy in the red portion of the spectrum.*

*With T8 and T12 options ranging from 15W to 40W, SYLVANIA's offerings should meet the needs of all indoor gardening.*

African violets do not grow under direct sunlight, which is about 10,000 foot candles, but normally under 1,000 foot candles. That means that **they are low-energy plants**. Therefore, according to Sylvania, you would use the GRO/AQ lamp and not the WS lamp. Now, if you have your cart near a window that gets some natural light, you can use the WS to augment the light. Keep in mind that you cannot increase the light for a shorter period, or vice versa because you cannot control the light level. The plants just will not grow right if you try to compensate for low or high levels by increasing or decreasing the

light level. Just as you can't cook a turkey at 800 degrees for half the time (I tried it and it didn't work).

Lamp	Lumens	Watts	Lumens/watt (efficiency)
F40CW	3200	40	80
F40T12GRO/WS	1875	40	47 (growth spectrum)
F40T12GRO	1200	40	30 (red spectrum)

### Lumens/watts chart

This chart will tell you how many lumens/watt are from 4-foot lamps commonly used in growing violets.

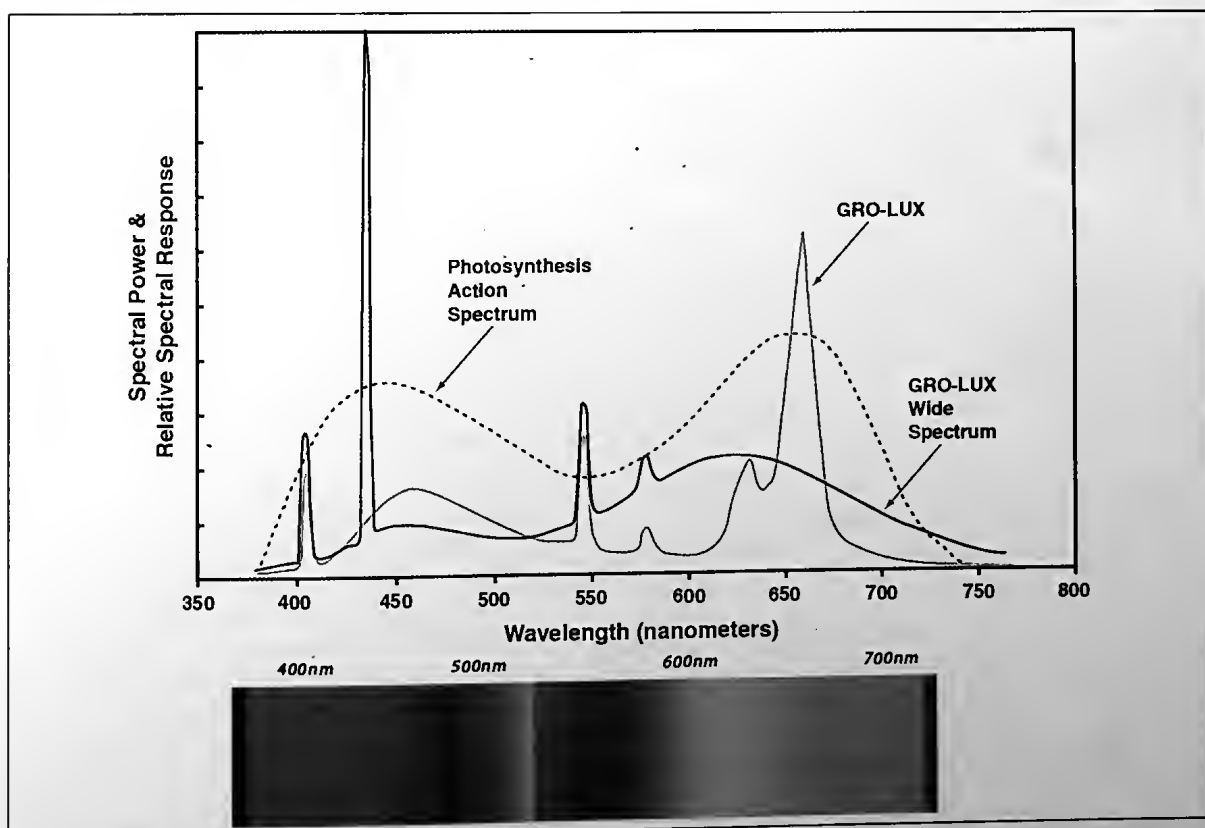
Keep in mind that the "quality" of the lumens makes a difference, so you should not necessarily go for the raw lumens of the lamp. The 1200 lumens of the F40T12GRO is better than the 3200 lumens of the F40CW.

### T-5 lamps

The T-5 is a new, high efficiency lamp that has more lumens per watt than the dependable F40CW. Now, remember that the difference between a T-8 and a T-12 is that the number is how many eighths-of-an-inch there are in the diameter.

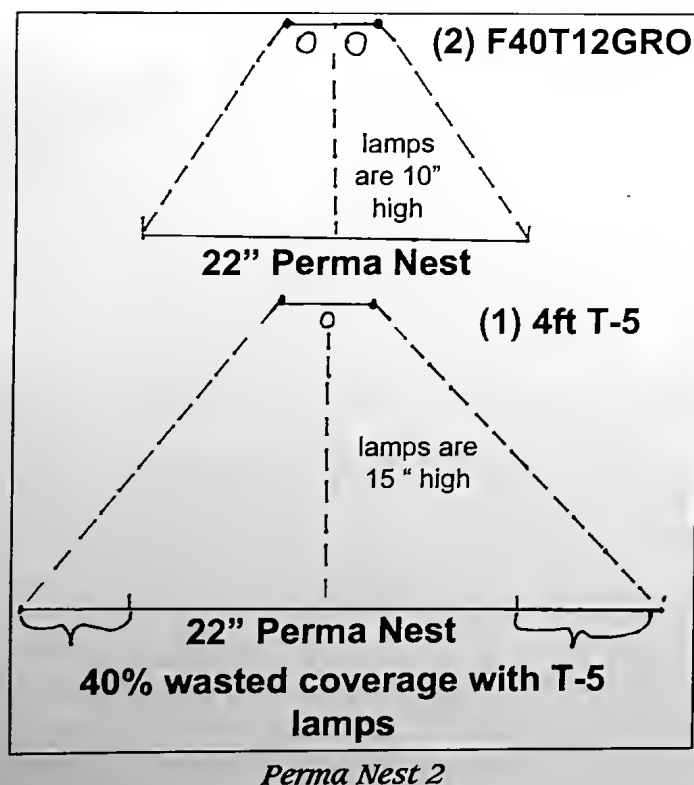
Therefore, a T-5 is 5/8-of-an-inch in diameter. It does require a special ballast and therefore, cannot be used in conjunction with a GRO-LUX lamp on the other side of the 2-lamp fixture. If, however, you have a large collection of violets and your electric bill is high because of all the carts you have, it can save you a good amount, especially if used with an electronic ballast.

An interesting example of how upgrading your lighting can save you money is when Paul Sorano from Lyndon Lyons Greenhouses completely changed his fluorescent lamp arrangement. He previously had 8-foot T-8 fixtures, which were old and had the magnetic ballasts. He removed all of those and installed the T-5 lamps with electronic ballasts. Because of the better lamp efficiency and the electronic ballasts, with the ability of removing one lamp if needed, he reduced his electric bill by 65%! Keep in mind that his old fixtures were rusty and the reflective properties were poor, causing what lighting engineers call lamp dirt depreciation (LDD).



*Spectral Power Chart - Courtesy of Sylvania/Osram*

One word of advice: remember that because T-5's can put out more light per watt, you'll need less of them, and you really should be careful about installing them unless you know what you're doing and how many lumens the particular T-5 you're using is putting out. An F40CW puts out 3200 lumens, while the T-5 4ft 54 watt lamp generates over 5,000 lumens, and it varies with each type of T-5 lamp. You can't just replace one T-5 for two F40 T12 unless you know the lumens AND the spectral curve. The higher the color rendition index, the better. However, you can't combine a warm and cool T-5 in one fixture, as you'll get WAY too much light. Too much light can ruin your plants. If you raise the lamps higher, yes, they will get the right footcandles, but you're wasting light "spilling" over the edges of the trays, negating the advantage of using them to begin with. If you have super large Perma Nest trays, much wider than 22", then you can take advantage of this, but most people do not, except for large nurseries like Lyndon Lyon. T-5's could probably light two 22" trays side by side, but they don't make floracarts this wide. Look at the diagram for a better explanation of why T-5's would not be of much benefit for the average grower.



## Distance of lamps to plants

I grow my plants about 10 inches from the top of the plant to the lamps when using 4 foot T12 lamps, which are 40 watts. If you use energy saving lamps which have lower lumens, you complicate things, and just moving the fixtures a little closer to make up the lower levels will cut the distribution of the light on the edge of the trays. You'll only light about 20 inches instead of the 22 inches you need for the Perma Nest trays. Now if you use T-5 lamps, all bets are off. There is no standard distance, as these lamps can have different outputs of lumens.

## Electronic Ballasts

The electronic ballast can run one lamp or two, unlike traditional magnetic ballasts, which must have both lamps installed when you use F40CW lamps. You can remove one lamp from the fixture on the electronic ballast, and it will run at full efficiency. This allows you to remove one lamp for one reason or another.

Replacing magnetic ballasts with electronic ballasts can save between 10-20% off the energy bill. They're able to work with one lamp or two, which the magnetic ones cannot. Magnetic ballasts need both lamps installed for it to work. Pulling one lamp out will cause both to go off. The electronic ones have a longer life. However, if you live in a cold area and need heat for most of the year, they won't save as much. Why? Because what heat they don't give off will require your heater to operate. Now if you live in a warm climate all year round, you will save a lot, as there will be more heat given off, which necessitates more air conditioning.

## Pauline Bartholomew

Pauline Bartholomew, who wrote *Growing to Show*, was a strong believer of using GRO-LUX lamps. She used both the regular GRO-LUX as well as the wide spectrum lamps, depending on the plant and whether it received any window or daylight in any form. She had her plants 8-10 inches from the standard African Violets, which is what I have been doing myself for over twenty



years. She also placed her variegated plants directly under the lamps to allow them to receive the maximum light possible. Since she first published the book, there have been other lamps that give just about the same performance as the GRO-LUX. Although Pauline passed away in 2011 at the age of 88, her advice still applies today.

### GRO-LUX alternatives

In doing this article, I spoke to many top African violets growers, and for the most part, they all had one central idea: to have one warm lamp (around 3200 Kelvin) and one cool lamp (around 6000 Kelvin). There were variations on this to some degree, but except for one or two people, all of them use the above setup in their 2-lamp fixture.

The lamps today are just plain wonderful. If you're on a tight budget, and you can't afford the GRO-LUX lamps, you can get 85% of the benefit by using any good quality F40CW as the cool lamp, and the Philips F40T12SoftWhiteDX 3000 degree Kelvin warm lamp, both of which are available at Home Depot. Remember that the GRO-LUX GRO/AQ is a warm lamp and the GRO/WS is a cool lamp. Almost any combination of warm/cool will work. Also, check the color rendition index of the lamp, the higher the better, giving a "smooth" color curve with fewer spikes.

Remember to use fixtures that have their two lamps close to each other. If they are too far, one side will get one color and the other side will get another, especially if the lamps are close to the plants.

### Conclusion

If you have the money, one GRO/AQ/WS and one GRO/AQ will give you about the best lighting,

if the two lamps in the fixture are close together. You will get about 85% the benefit if you use one warm and one cool of almost any brand, with Home Depot having all you need. Try to buy lamps that have a CRI (color rendition index) over 80. Remember that lighting is a small part of growing, as environment, fertilizer, etc are a big factor too.

Don't use T-5 lamps unless you are lighting a very wide area, much more than 22" wide, as you will only waste light by doing so, causing spill over. Also, remember that you cannot use two lamps to adjust the color with T-5's the way you can with F40T12. The F40T12 have been time tested for decades, but if you know the technical points on T-5, they can work well. It's not too easy, however, to analyze this.

If you need a new ballast, buy the electronic version. They pay for themselves in a couple years. If you live in a cold climate most of the year, they won't pay back as much.

One tip when you replace a burned out lamp - spray the end pins of the lamp with WD-40 to allow easy removal from the fixture when the time comes.

### Thanks

I would like to thank Paul Sorano from Lyndon Lyons, Richard Nicholas, Sandy Skalski, Paula Bal, Georgene Albrecht, Sylvania, and the wonderful members of the AVS of Springfield, PA, for their help in this article, along with the African Violet Nerds on Facebook that gave their input.

*Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant. He can be reached by emailing him at [ndlipson@gmail.com](mailto:ndlipson@gmail.com) or calling 610-356-6183 after 1pm Eastern time. I will return your call.*

*AVSA Office Hours  
Monday - Thursday  
9:00 am - 4:00 pm*





*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## ***Frozen in Time***

*2nd Best African Violet in Show*

*Exhibited by: Olga Semova*

*Hybridized by: L Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano*

*Standard*



***Rob's  
Humpty  
Doo***

*Exhibited by:*

***Debbie McInnes***

*Hybridized by:*

***R. Robinson***

***Semiminiature Trailer***

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

***Nautilocalyx  
sp. GRF  
960 4023***

*Exhibited by:*

***Eileen McGrath***



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

# How Design Entries are Judged.....

By Edna Rourke

Exhibitors often wonder why their exhibits in the design division of a show receive the awards that were awarded. The panel of judges looks at many aspects before a decision is made on the award an entry is given (deemed worthy of).

There are three categories in the design section:

1. Interpretive Flower Arrangements
2. Interpretive Plant Arrangements
3. Container Gardens

This article will deal with the first two categories – Interpretive Flower and Interpretive Plant Arrangements. Both of these categories use the same scale of points. They are:

1. Design .....40 points
2. Interpretation of schedule . .15 points
3. Distinction and Originality .15 points
4. Suitability of materials . . .10 points
5. Relationship of materials . .10 points
6. Condition of Materials . . .10 points

Our AVSA Handbook tells us in interpretive plant arrangements the African violet (s) should be the focal point, and in interpretive flower arrangements, the blossoms should be emphasized and readily apparent in the design. When using blossoms, it is much more effective to use blossoms all of one color rather than many different color blossoms which would create confusion.

As noted in the AVSA Scale of points for judging interpretive flower and interpretive plant arrangements, forty (40) points has been allotted for design. Design encompasses the following areas in the order of their importance:

Design .....40 points

## 1. Space

Your schedule tells you how much space has been allotted (allowed), and you must stay within these dimensions. Your design must utilize the space well, and fill the space without being crowded, or extending beyond it. Some of the open areas in your design may also be considered

as "filled space". One of the most common faults found in the filling of the allotted area is that a design is too small for the space. Remember, points are deducted for this, as well as if an exhibit extends beyond the given space.

## 2. Balance

Balance in a design may either be symmetrical (when both sides are equal) or asymmetrical, uneven. Therefore, if symmetrical is your goal, it is an equal visual balance. If asymmetrical balance is desired, unequal visual balance and stability must be achieved. Whatever the case, the design should be stable and well balanced. Points are deducted if balance and stability are lacking to any degree. For example: Symmetrical balance – both sides equal; Asymmetrical balance – uneven, as a see saw.

## 3. Proportion and Scale

Proportion and scale have to do with the materials used and their relation to both the space allowed in which to put them and each other. The colors, textures, voids, size, etc. – all have to be considered. Points are deducted if the container, plant material, or any of the previously listed items are not in good scale or proportion.

## 4. Contrast

Interest in a design is created by the use of color, size, form, and texture. There should be a definite unity of components throughout the design. For example, using just one branch or leaf of plant material, but using many different types, is distracting and does not create contrast; it causes confusion. Use interesting materials, but make sure they go well together. Remember, points will be deducted if there is disturbing repetition of any of the above.

## 5. Dominance

One part of the design should be dominant and hold the whole design together. It could be the

line, the texture, color – but not the background or a bright or overly large container.

## 6. Color

If the show schedule specifies color in any way this should be considered first. If the exhibitor chooses colors, they should be chosen to communicate either a mood, a theme, or a style, etc.

However, if the choice of color is not good, points would be deducted.

In evaluating entries in the design division of a show, all of the above mentioned are considered under design and constitute 40 points of the score of the entries. These 40 points are broken down as to their importance. Consideration is then given to the number of points awarded under design.

The goal of any design is the use of the elements of design manipulated by the principles of design to create beauty, harmony, expression, and order. Therefore, the elements of design are:

- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 1. Color | 4. Pattern |
| 2. Form  | 5. Space   |
| 3. Line  | 6. Texture |

The principles of design are:

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Balance   | 4. Proportion |
| 2. Contrast  | 5. Rhythm     |
| 3. Dominance | 6. Scale      |

## Interpretation of Schedule 15 points

Interpreting a theme is the choice of the exhibitor. The interpretation may be suggestive or literal. To me, it is more interesting to be suggestive and use material that will be communicative to the viewer. The components should be related, and contribute to the end result of the interpretation. Deduct points if the interpretation is too weak or confusing.

## Distinction and Originality 15 points

A designer should use imagination as well as skill (skill will come with practice) when choosing materials, and their usage when creating an exhibit. Ordinary material used in a unusual way

leads to distinction. The use of interesting backgrounds adds to the distinction and originality of the design. Make sure to check the schedule to be sure backgrounds are permitted and can be altered or changed. Points will be deducted when a design lacks the use of skill in handling of material. I can't emphasize enough that practice will give skill to an exhibitor.

## Suitability 10 points

When constructing a design, the exhibitor chooses plant material, a container base, mechanics, background, and an accessory, if permitted by the schedule. All of the chosen components should be appropriate to each other and in harmony to the class. Points will be deducted for any unsuitable choices.

## Relationship of Materials 10 points

Colors, textures, sizes, etc. should go together well. It is not good practice to use materials that are incompatible. The use of colors, textures, and sizes to create a picture or miniature scene reflects the skill of exhibitor, and if any of these are not suited to each other, points should be deducted. However, if a show schedule dictates otherwise, points will not be deducted.

## Condition of Materials

All plant material should be well conditioned, free of defects and insects, and fresh plant material should be clean. All plant material should be washed before using it. Containers and accessories should be clean, and all backgrounds and draping should look fresh. Mechanics should be hidden, without the obvious use of a lot of covering. This makes for a neater, overall appearance.

Deduct points for exposed pots, or mechanics that aren't a part of the design. Backgrounds that are not handled well will lose points. Wilted plant material, spent blossoms, dirty components - all will detract from the exhibit, and points are lost as well.





*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## ***P.A. Longtin***

*Exhibited by: Marge Farrand*

*Hybridized by: D. Crouteau*

*Standard*

# GROWING TIPS: The Show is Coming!

By Allan Reith

The show is coming! Are you ready? You should have been spending the last two months getting ready. If you have been doing that, your plants are full, green, and large. They have buds on them. Yes, you should be allowing them to get buds and flowers now.

Grooming is important for the last six weeks. Keep those leaves clean, keep the suckers off (those semiminis love to sucker now), and get rid of those baby leaves (leaves smaller and shorter than the ones above them).

Some buds may have trouble peeking out above the leaves. Gently nudge them out into the open so they can open properly and not distort the leaves.

Gently nudge the leaves one way or another to fill those gaps. You can move them about 1/4 inch a week. Place a small straw against the petiole (leaf stem) near the edge of the pot.

Should you get rid of a slightly damaged leaf? At this point, it may be best to leave that leaf on

the plant. In judging the plant, the judge can take away one point for that damaged leaf but up to three points for a big gap in the foliage. Early (four months or more) before the show, it should be removed, but now it would be better to keep it.

Check your mini and semiminis for size. They must be less than 6" or 8", respectively. If the diameter of the foliage is more than this, remove the outer leaves until they come down to the right size. This will have to be done before the show, or the plant will be disqualified.

Check those pots on your standard plants. They should be about 1/3 the size of the diameter of your plant. The plants may have grown a lot, and your plant would be under-potted. Slip potting will correct this without disturbing the plant roots and shocking your plant.

Get ready! It's almost Show Time!

From *Desert Blooms*,  
publication of the Tucson AVS



## THE RELEVANCE OF FEEDING VIOLETS

Submitted by Barbara Conrad

Excerpt taken from an article in AVS Magazine

by Doris J. Ontile, December 1957, pg. 21

"Feeding is a most important factor in growing strong, healthy blooming plants. This reminds me of an old story. A man owned a horse, and he didn't think much of feeding him as he was a little close to the dollar. Each day he cut down a little

on the horse's food and everything was going fine. Then just as he got to the point where he didn't have to feed the horse anything at all, the critter up and died! Feed those plants; spend some time with them."

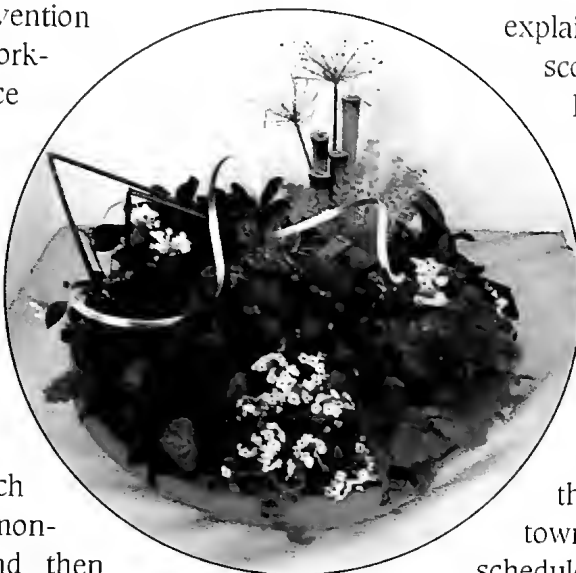


# "The New Girl in Town" FLOWER DESIGNS USING THE PAVE' TECHNIQUE

By Mary Lou Harden  
mlhard@verizon.net

At last year's AVSA convention in Detroit, I attended a workshop presented by Joyce Stork of Fremont, Nebraska, on the subject of "Designs Using The Pave' Technique," which is described as the art of using flowers and other materials to cover a surface in artistic patterns of color and texture. It was a wonderful program in which Joyce explained and demonstrated the technique and then asked for audience participation.

We watched intently as five or six groups of people, randomly selected from the audience, chose plants, flowers and all kinds of accessories which Joyce had furnished. Each group created a Pave' design and each design was then judged, based on a point-score system which Joyce proposed. As each design was judged, Joyce



explained her reasoning for the score. I was intrigued and hooked!

Joyce had previously written an article titled "Using Pave' Techniques When Designing with African Violets," which was published in the January-February 2012 *African Violet Magazine*.

In the article, Joyce says that "'Pave' is the new girl in town." Indeed, the design schedules for our African violet

shows have remained consistently the same for many years. Consistency is not bad, but when something new is introduced into the marketplace, it may be a good thing to investigate it and perhaps even embrace it.

Upon my return home from the convention, I decided that we would introduce this "new girl" to the members of my local club, the Tampa African Violet Society (TAVS), by including the Pave' technique among our programs for the year. TAVS has two meetings per month – one is a night meeting to accommodate people who work, and the other is a morning meeting which works well for those who don't do night driving or otherwise just prefer meeting in the daytime.

I decided the program would be given at our November day meeting, held at a local library very near my home. That turned out to be a good choice because, as Joyce stated in her article, "you'll need a lot of materials." I followed her advice and brought four trays of various kinds of plants, many blooming, in addition to several nicely blooming African violets, small stones, thin



bamboo stalks, dried seed pods, thistle heads, tree bark, small pieces of wood, and other items to challenge the imagination.

After explaining the technique and demonstrating by creating my own design, the members were divided into small groups so that there were four or five people in each group. I had already prepared shallow containers, using Oasis™ to hold water. After just a wee bit of encouragement, the members quickly began to work on their projects, poring over the abundance of plants and materials available from which to choose. I assisted as necessary. However, I found that my assistance was really unnecessary! Everyone had a good time, and we found that 99% of our members are wonderfully creative. I've included the pictures of our members' creations.



If you check the show schedule for this year's AVSA Convention show to be held May 26 to June 2 in Austin, TX, you'll see that it includes a class in Section XII, Interpretive Flower Arrangements, described as follows:

Class 91. "Texas Springtime" – A pave' design (DISPLAY ONLY). Limit 4.



While these designs will not be judged, I hope there will be four entries so that everyone can see how beautiful these designs can be. Maybe someone reading this article will be brave and sign up. And I hope your club will read Joyce's article and include the Pave' technique for one of your programs.



# ARE YOU READY FOR 2013

The First Austin African Violet Society is proud to be hosting the  
2013 National African Violet Convention in Austin, Texas.

# My Concerns with Current Classification Practices

By Andrew Norris

**Definition of GENUS** 1: a class, kind, or group marked by common characteristics or by one common characteristic; *specifically*: a category of biological classification ranking between the family and the species, comprising structurally or phylogenetically related species or an isolated species exhibiting unusual differentiation, and being designated by a Latin or Latinized capitalized singular noun.

2: A class of objects divided into several subordinate species

## Definition of SPECIES

1 *a*: kind, sort *b*: a class of individuals having common attributes and designated by a common name; *specifically*: a logical division of a genus or more comprehensive class <confessing sins in *species* and in number> *c*: the human race : human beings – often used with *the* <survival of the *species* in the nuclear age> *d* (1): a category of biological classification ranking immediately below the genus or subgenus, comprising related organisms or populations potentially capable of interbreeding, and being designated by a binomial that consists of the name of a genus followed by a Latin or latinized uncapitalized noun or adjective agreeing grammatically with the genus name (2): an individual or kind belonging to a biological species *e*: a particular kind of atomic nucleus, atom, molecule, or ion.

Both definitions credited to <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

Am I the only one who has noticed the recent upheaval in the restructuring of familiar gesneriad genera? How about the only one that is left wondering why, and expecting an answer that is clear and compelling, leaving you feeling as if the new way of defining the formerly accepting genera is not only correct, but necessary? First, I would like to point out; my stance is not based simply on a

reluctance to accept change. To the contrary, I welcome change, when and where change is due.

I see major faults in the current way science is approaching classification. I feel that there is a need for a standard, universal method for making classification decisions regarding organisms' placement within the binomial classification structure.

As an avid hobbyist, I have worked with numerous plant and animal species, in the capacities of displaying, studying, and propagating them. I have learned a great deal regarding nutrition, natural habitat, husbandry, diagnosis, and treatment, while familiarizing myself with hundreds of plant and animal species. I also majored in Environmental Sciences.

I began this article with the definitions of both genus and species. I feel it is important to point out just what the purposes of these terms are, and how they are used to create a scientific name. As defined above, a genus is a group of organisms, able to reproduce and sharing similar traits, and a species is an organism within a genus, which exhibits unique and defined characteristics. However, the definitions above do not specify if the offspring of different species within a genus must be fertile to be considered members of the same genus, and in the case of plants, intergenetic crosses have muddled this definition even further.

Here are some commonly given justifications for reclassifying an organism. In no particular order they are:

- 1) The organism was already described by someone else, and it is confirmed that their description precedes the current taxonomic designation.
- 2) Structural differences, either in flower structure, overall composition, or any combination or presence of internal or external physical deviations from other similar organisms.

- 3) Genetic similarities or differences, as defined by modern DNA mapping and genetic research.

It is seldom mentioned if there is the potential for breeding with other organisms within, or close to the organism's current genus, and if that was used as a deciding factor, even though it is part of the criteria given above for designating genus and species.

There is a lack of universal means for determining just where an organism fits into our current binomial classification system, leaving the entire decision, not a scientific one, but one born out on opinion. Scientific method dictates that when devising an experiment, one composes a hypothesis and then, using a variable and a control, attempts to prove or disprove the hypothesis. For the results to be accepted as fact, the same procedures and resulting conclusions must be able to be replicated and drawn by other members of the scientific community. Classification is just such an experiment, whereby a known organism, with an established binomial moniker is the control, by which the new organism or organism in question is compared to, with the hypothesis being that the organism is either the same, different, or different enough to be a unique species, but similar enough to belong in the same genera. Yet, we have no established and repeatable way to reach the same conclusions as other taxonomists and we still allow the change to become established, taxonomic law.

Let's look at the recent revision and renaming of the former genus *Chirita*. All of the rosette-forming plants have now been placed with what was once a monotypic genus, *Primulina*. The only place-holder here was the unique *Primulina tobaccum*, with its scented foliage and star-shaped flowers. At the time of this writing, it is determined that *Primulina tobaccum* does not hybridize with other *Primulina* (former *Chirita*), and the former plant has obviously different flowers. The justification for this edit was said to be the finding that *Primulina* was described first and therefore, was the correct name for all of these plants. I also disagree with the change, because as noted, the former genus *Chirita* and *Primulina* are

dissimilar. Would it not have made better sense to relocate *Primulina tobaccum*, if the *Chirita* were to take that name? There is no doubt that the genus *Chirita* needed work. After all, the erect growing, annual, and shrubby plants could hardly be the same as the rosette-forming perennials we are most familiar with.

Here again, we take another turn, calling the tall, erect chirita, *Microchirita*, with the new taxonomic change. Micro, meaning small or miniature, has no sensible placement among a group of primarily tall, prominent plants. In my opinion, the erect-growing plants should have been designated a new name, and the later genera left alone. The change has triggered confusion and disgruntled murmurs from many growers, who have come to know and accept their plants by their former name.

What is most confusing to me is that the very things cited as the reasons genus has been changed, rearranged, or dissected are said not to be the way classification is decided. It is clear that there is need for a structured means of determining an organism's place within taxonomic law; a structure that any person with a capable mind and inclination can demonstrate because it is universal and irrefutable.

The reason there is not one is because few people utilize the same methods or criteria, or even garner the same meaning from the various ways of differentiating species. For example, take a look at using the genetic make-up of an organism as a means to classify it. This should be straightforward, as DNA neither changes nor is subject to opinion. It is finite, visual, and readily reproduced in the lab. The problems with using genetics, as I see it, are twofold.

First, at what percentage of similarity is an organism considered to be the same genus or species? This would have to be decided and adhered to. To put this in perspective, *Saintpaulia velutina* was recently determined to be a merely a variant of *Saintpaulia ionantha* and has since been renamed *Saintpaulia ionantha* ssp. *Velutina*. I disagree with this emphatically because an examination of the two plants, in person or in situ, reveal distinct differences in plant

composition. With *S. velutina* (yes, I am using the old taxonomy), the foliage is rounded, dark, very hairy, and born at the end of the petiole, more like a lollipop, than that of a spear, which is the way *S. ionantha*'s foliage is seen to be. The flowers of *S. velutina* are a darker shade of purple, and in my direct experience, the flowers of *S. velutina* shrivel and die on the plant, whereas, in *S. ionantha*, the flowers are ejected while only slightly faded after only a few days.

I feel that classification should not function solely as an arm of science and should serve the world by establishing, as readily as possible, variances in different organisms.

I favor using visual distinctions as a means of establishing species designation, to some degree. But I also leave room for sub species and variants, where applicable, as illustrated by numerous species, such as the different localities of *Dendrobates tinctorious* or cultivars of *Episcia lilliciana*. Genetic research is useful in establishing a genus designation, and could be used to determine sub species, versus species status. But there must be a standard before it can be applied. It is likely that similarities and differences are better expressed in the presence or absence of one or more genes, and not simply on the amount of DNA in common.

This brings me to the process of using structural or visual differences as a sole means of determining binomial designation. I understand this in some cases, as in using things like flower structure and leaf arrangement for determining a taxonomic 'niche' for an organism. I feel that classification should serve not only as a function of science, but as a part of a universal awareness to readily recognize the differences and relationships between organisms. But in others, as they say, you cannot judge a book by its cover.

With factors such as convergent evolution, where plants and animals sharing no current common ancestor and being continents apart have the same appearances and adaptations, appearances alone are not to be relied upon. Beyond convergent evolution, especially in the case of plants, many things just plain look alike. It is here that I would go a step further and utilize

genetic study to place a plant in the correct genus, and depending on the obvious visual distinction or lack thereof, also use genetic information for assigning the organism species recognition.

I am concerned about the current decision to place *Saintpaulia* within the genus *Streptocarpus*. Most of us know *Saintpaulia* as the beloved and familiar rosette houseplant, we also know *Streptocarpus*, with their long, strap-like leaves held in a loose rosette. They appear very different. Yet, it has been proposed that the two are genetically similar enough and *Streptocarpus* having been *first described*, they should become one genus, *Streptocarpus*.

There are some rosette-forming *Streptocarpus* that remind one of a violet, but the plants, especially with seed pods, are readily distinguishable at a glance. The flower structure and most familiar foliage structures are readily apparent as different as well. Further differences include the time it takes the seed pods to ripen, which is between four and nine months in *Saintpaulia* and much shorter in *Streptocarpus*, with most ripening in four months. At this time, *Streptocarpus* and *Saintpaulia* have not been successfully hybridized. This is further underscored by the fact that *Streptocarpus* means twisted seedpod in Latin, a trait not exhibited by any *Saintpaulia*. *Saintpaulia* have a more limited geographic range. *Streptocarpus* are known from Madagascar and over a larger area of the African continent, with some species accepting drier conditions, than any *Saintpaulia*.

I feel the classification changes will promote nothing but confusion and frustration, among devoted growers.

I will end with the relatively recent decision to return all *Tricantha*, *Dalbergaria*, *Pentadinia*, *Columnnea*, and *Bucinellina* to the single genus, *Columnnea*. While it is apparent, by flower structure alone, these plants are related, there is certainly distinction in growth habit, leaf type and arrangement, the presence or lack of hairs, and there is the fact that none produce fertile offspring when crossed between the former genera. I am using the *Columnnea* as a launching pad to suggest we meet in the middle, between the taxo-



nomie "lumpers" and "splitters" and utilize a sub-genus or complex classification identifier.

I propose we adopt *Columnnea dalbergaria gigantea* or *Columnnea tricantha purpureo-vittata*. It shows a clear relationship, but also a distinction among groups within the same genus. This is sensible because by definition, a genus should be able to reproduce within itself, and *Columnnea purpureo-vittata* cannot cross with *Columnnea gigantea*. This is actually a family, subfamily, genus, and then species break down, but it works nicely where it is needed, so why not use it?

I hope I have demonstrated the need for a universally-adopted means of classification. And facilitate a less confusing understanding of the differences and similarities between organisms.

Most importantly, I hope I have inspired some-

one in the scientific community with the credentials to take the bull by the horns and create a system such as this. I also sought to embolden fellow growers and hobbyists to challenge, and question things! Don't be afraid or intimidated to have your voice heard because all knowledge is good, whether learned from working closely with plants and reading countless pages of information or gained in a university setting.

I would be overjoyed to see a collaboration between growers and scientists to truly establish and define the whole nature of an organism because so much can be offered by working with living material, as opposed to preserved field specimens. And of course, genetics and DNA research has opened new doors for the taxonomist; together, the accomplishments could be concrete and truly enlightening.



Photo Credit: Paula Bal

## ***Rob's Galiwinku***

*Exhibited by: Paula Bal*

*Hybridized by: R. Robinson*

*Semiminiature Trailer*



# Coming Events



## March 8 - 10 - ARIZONA

Tucson AVS 55th Annual Show/Sale  
Foothills Mall  
7401 N. La Cholla Blvd.  
Tucson, AZ 85741  
Mar 8 - Limited sales after 7:30pm - 9pm  
Mar 9 - 10am - 9pm  
Mar 10 - 11am - 5pm

## March 1 & 2 - FLORIDA

Central Florida AVS Judged Show  
Beardall Senior Center  
800 Delaney Ave.  
Orlando, FL  
Mar 1 - Noon - 4pm  
Mar 2 - 10am - 4pm  
Info: Linda Price  
laprice@yahoo.com  
Pat Murray  
mezozzled@hotmail.com

## March 2 & 3 - TEXAS

Spring Branch AVC Spring Sale  
Hermann Park Garden Center  
1500 Hermann Dr.  
Houston, TX 77004  
Mar 2 - 10am - 4pm  
Mar 3 - 10am - 3pm  
Info: Karla Ross (281) 748-8417  
Email: kjwross@yahoo.com

## March 9 - FLORIDA

*"Get to Know and Grow African Violets & other Gesneriads Many Gesneriads Grow and Bloom Well Outside in Florida"*

Presentation by Thad Scaggs/  
Fantasy African Violet Club  
Mar 9 - 2:45pm - 4:15pm  
Spring Hill Public Library  
9220 Spring Hill Blvd.,  
Spring Hill, FL  
Open Free to Public  
Free Drawing for African violet &  
Other Plant Material  
Info: Thad Scaggs (552) 398-1679

## March 16 & 17 - TEXAS

First Austin African Violet Society  
Spring Display/Sale  
Austin Area Garden Center  
Zilker Park Botanical Garden  
2220 Barton Springs Road  
Austin, TX 78746  
Mar 16 - 10:00am - 4:30pm  
Mar 17 - 11:00am - 4:00pm  
Info: Susan Kautz (512) 365-1818  
Email: gizzmo@austin.rr.com  
www.faavs.org

## March 16 & 17 - COLORADO

Rocky Mountain AV Council  
Judged Show/Sale  
Tagawa Garden Center  
7711 S. Parker Road  
Centennial, CO 80016  
Sat. Mar. 16 - 9:00am - 4:00pm  
Sun. Mar. 17 - 10:00am to 4:00pm  
Info: Nelly Levine (303) 423-6072  
NLevine28@msn.com  
Website: RMAVC.com

## March 22 & 23 MINNESOTA

AVS of Minnesota  
Spring Judged Show and Sale  
Har Mar Mall  
Snelling & County Road B  
Roseville, MN 55113  
Mar 22 - 10am - 7pm  
Mar 23 - 10am - 4pm

Info: Connie Rowley &  
Tanya Iverson  
http://sites.  
google.com/site/avsmnnesota

## March 22 & 23 TEXAS

Dallas Metro Trio AVS  
Spring Display and Sale  
Both Days: 10am - 4pm  
North Haven Gardens  
7700 Northaven Road  
Dallas, TX 75250

## March 23 & 24 LOUISIANA

Sundowners AVS  
33rd Annual Show/Sale  
Baton Rouge Garden Center  
7950 Independence Blvd.  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Mar 23 - 2pm-5pm  
Mar 24 - 11am-3pm  
Info: George Ramirez  
(985) 384-0309  
Email: susiesmith@live.com

## MARCH 23 & 24 - NEW YORK

Sweetwater AVS, West Sayville, N.Y.  
38th Annual Judged Show/Sale  
Mar 23 - 2-5pm  
Mar 24 - Noon - 4pm  
West Sayville Fire Department  
Montauk Highway at Atlantic Ave.  
Sayville N.Y.  
Donation \$2.00  
Info: (631) 277-2880

## March 23 - DELAWARE

Delaware AVS 47th Annual Show/Sale Golden Jubilee  
Delaware AV and Gesneriad Society Celebrates 50 Years  
Bosco's Christiana Town Center Store Auditorium  
Route 273 in Christiana, Delaware  
Mar 23 - 10am - 5pm  
Info: Quentin Schlieder  
(302) 653-6449  
Email: qcsjr@comcast.net

**March 23 - WASHINGTON**

Seattle AVS and Puget  
Sound Gesneriad Society  
One-Day Annual Show/Sale  
Swanson's Nursery  
9701 15th Ave NW  
Seattle, WA 98117  
Plant Sales: 9am - 4pm  
Show: Noon - 4pm  
For SAVS Info: Denny Van Dorn  
Email:  
dennyv@pacificcrestconst.com  
For PSGS Info: Bob Clark  
Email: bobclark98122@gmail.com

**April 5 & 6 - TEXAS**

First AVS of Wichita Falls  
Annual Show/Sale  
Fellowship Hall, University  
United Methodist Church  
3405 Taft, Blvd., Wichita Falls, TX  
Apr 5 - 2:30pm - 4:30pm  
Apr 6 - 10am - 4pm  
Free admission  
Info: (940) 928-2371  
Email: Gail Elmore,  
Hunley@nts-online.net

**April 6 & 7 - NEW YORK**

Long Island AVS 58th Annual  
Judged Show/Sale  
April 6 - 2pm - 5pm  
April 7 - 1pm to 4pm  
John A. Anderson Recreation Center  
111 North Oceanside Road  
Rockville Centre, New York  
Info: Barbara Lindholm  
Email: blindholm@optonline.net

**April 6 - CONNECTICUT**

Windsor AVS Annual Judged  
Show/Sale  
Grace Episcopal Church  
311 Broad Street  
Windsor, CT 06095  
Hours: 8:30am - 2:30pm  
Info: Nancy Hayes (860) 242-0162  
Email: violetnancy@comcast.net  
http://  
www.windsorafricanviolets.org/

**April 6 & 7 - CALIFORNIA**

Capital City AVS Annual  
Judged Show/Sale  
Sacramento Garden & Arts Center  
3330 McKinley Blvd  
Sacramento, CA  
Apr 6 - 1pm - 4pm  
Apr 7 - 11am - 3pm  
Info: Lynn Lombard  
(530) 637-9000  
Email: lynn\_lombard@att.net  
URL: www.sacviolets.org

**April 6 & 7 - NEW YORK**

Capital District AVS Annual  
Show/Sale  
Apr 6 - 1pm - 5pm  
Apr 7 - 11am - 4pm  
Albany County Cooperative Ext.  
24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY  
Info: Heidi Dillenbeck  
heidisviolets@aol.com  
(518) 573-2486

**April 6 & 7 - New Jersey**

AV Club of Morris County Annual  
Show/Sale  
Frelinghuysen Arboretum  
53 East Hanover Ave.  
Morristown, New Jersey  
Apr 6 - 1pm - 4:30pm  
Apr 7 - 11am - 3pm  
Info: Jill Fischer  
Email: HF.JG.Fischer@comcast.net

**April 6 - ILLINOIS**

Illinois AVS Show Sale  
Educational Exhibit  
Southpark Mall  
Center Court  
10am - 5pm  
4500 16th Street,  
Off I-74, John Deere Exit.  
Moline, Illinois  
Info: tomijean52@comcast.net

**April 6 & 7 - MISSOURI**

Sho-Me African Violet Club  
28th Annual Show/Sale  
Loose Park Garden Center  
51st Street & Wornall  
Kansas City, MO  
April 6 - 9am - 3pm  
April 7 - 10am - 3pm  
Info: Fred & Pat Inbody  
(816) 373-6915  
E-Mail: kskd1@juno.com

**April 12th -14th Virginia**

Richmond AVS  
Judged Show/Sale  
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden  
1800 Lakeside Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23228  
Fri. Apr.12 1pm - 5pm (sale)  
Sat. Apr 13 9am - 5pm (sale)  
Sat. Apr.13 1pm - 5pm (show)  
Sun. Apr. 14 9am - 5pm  
(show and sale)  
Info: Bill Schmidt (804) 266-6157  
schmidt.wc@verizon.net  
http://richmondavs.wordpress.com

**April 12 & 13 - Tennessee**

Dixie AVS 2013 Convention  
Judged Show/Sale  
Whispering Woods Hotel  
11200 E Goodman Rd.  
Olive Branch, MS  
April 12 - 12 noon - 5 pm  
April 13 - 10:30 - 4 pm  
Info. 901-372-2040  
Email: shiann48@bellsouth.net

**April 13- CONNECTICUT**

Thimble Island AVS Show/Sale  
Willoughby Wallace Library  
146 Thimble Islands Road  
Exit #56, Branford, CT  
Apr 13 - 12 Noon to 3:30pm  
Info: Madeline Clem  
(203) 481-9455  
E-mail: mycbuzzard@aol.com

**April 19 & 20 - ALABAMA**

Early Bird Violet Club  
Annual Show/Sale  
Hours: Apr 19 - 2pm - 4pm  
Apr 20 - 9am - 3pm  
Birmingham Botanical Gardens  
2621 Lane Park Road  
Birmingham, AL 35223  
Info: Martha Coleman  
(256) 378-7398  
Gwen Johnson: (205) 991-5335

**April 19, 20, & 21****PENNSYLVANIA**

Springfield AVS Annual  
Judged Show/Sale  
Springfield Mall  
1250 Baltimore Pike  
Springfield, Pa  
Apr 19 - Sale: Noon - 9pm  
Apr 20 - Show: Noon - 9pm  
Sale: 10am - 9pm  
April 21 - Show & Sale  
11am - 4pm  
Info: Leslie Swezey  
(484) 477-7535  
Email: hswezey@gmail.com

**April 20 & 21 - OHIO**

Columbus AVS Annual Show/Sale  
Franklin Park Conservatory &  
Botanical Gardens  
1777 East Broad St.  
Columbus, OH 43203  
Show: Apr 20 - Noon to 5pm;  
Apr 21, 10am - 4pm  
Sale: Apr 20, 10am - 5pm;  
Apr 21, 10am - 4pm.  
Free parking Free to public.  
Contact:  
donnav8452@columbus.rr.com

**April 20 & 21 - NEW YORK**

African Violet and Gesneriad Society  
of Rochester Show/Sale  
Perinton Square Mall  
Routes 250 and 31  
Fairport, NY  
Apr 20 - Noon - 5 pm  
Apr 21 - 11 am - 4 pm

Info: Bob Springer (585) 413-0606  
Email: blossoms002@yahoo.com

**April 20 & 21 - CONNECTICUT**

Naugatonic AVS Annual  
Judged Show/Sale  
Apr 20 - 1pm - 5pm  
Apr 21 - 11am - 4pm  
Homewood Suites  
6905 Main St.  
Exit 55 off Merritt Parkway  
Stratford CT.  
Info: Roger Wheeler  
(203) 924 0017

**April 20 & 21 - MONTREAL,  
QUEBEC, CANADA**

Societe des Saintpaulia de Montreal  
Judged Show/Sale  
4601 Sherbrooke St. East  
Apr 20 - 13:00 - 16:00  
Apr 21 - 1:00 - 16:00  
Info: www.  
saintpaulia-montreal.com  
Email:  
saintpauliamontreal@hotmail.com  
Voice Mail: (514) 990-5701

**April 21 - ONTARIO, CANADA**

Toronto AVS - Annual Show/Sale  
10am - 4:30 pm  
Toronto Botanical Garden  
Visit: www.tavs.ca  
Email: info@tavs.ca

**April 26 & 27 - NEW JERSEY**

Bergen County AVS Show/Sale  
Apr 26 - 3pm - 9pm  
Apr 27 - 9am - 3pm  
Old North Reformed Church  
120 Washington Ave.,  
corner of Madison Ave.  
Info: Linda LaPresti  
(201) 265-4410

**April 27 - CALIFORNIA**

A.V.S.A. Council of  
Southern California  
Montrose and Burbank  
African Violet Societies

Apr 27 - 10am - 4pm  
Descanso Gardens  
1418 Descanso Drive,  
La Canada Flintridge, CA  
Info (818) 951-3597 or  
(818) 508-1937

**April 27 - OREGON**

Portland AVS 1 Day Plant Sale  
Tabor Heights Methodist Church  
6161 SE Stark St  
Portland, OR 97215  
Hours: 10am - 3pm  
Info: Tina Banks, (503) 262-0564  
Email: tibanks\_2@yahoo.com

**April 27 - CALIFORNIA**

AV Council of Southern California,  
Burbank AVS & Montrose  
AVS Judged Show/Sale  
Descanso Gardens  
1418 Descanso Dr.  
La Canada Flintridge Dr.  
Info: (818) 951-3597 or  
(818) 508-1937

**April 27 - ONTARIO, CANADA**

Lakeshore AVS Annual Show/Sale  
St. Philip's Lutheran Church  
61 West Deane Park Drive  
Etobicoke, Ontario, M9B 2S1  
(The East Mall and Rathburn Road  
9am - 5pm  
Info: Doris Brownlie (905) 270-6776  
Linda LoPresti (201) 265-4410  
Beverley Williams:  
beverleyandbrucewilliams@  
rogers.com  
April 26 - 3pm - 9 pm  
April 27 - 9 am - 3 pm  
Old North Reformed Church  
120 Washington Ave.,  
corner of Madison Ave.  
Dumont, NJ 07628

**April 27 & 28 - NEW YORK**

AVS of Syracuse  
60th Annual Show/Sale  
Beaver Lake Nature Center  
8477 East Mud Lake Road

Baldwinsville, NY 13027

April 27 1 pm to 6 pm

April 28 10 am to 4 pm

For Info: Contact Ann Kelly

(315) 637-5733

Email: akelly002@twcny.rr.com

Attendees: Admission is free

but there is a Beaver Lake

\$3.00 parking fee per car.

#### **April 27 & 28 - VIRGINIA**

Tidewater AVS Show/Sale

Norfolk Botanical

Gardens - Baker Hall

Apr 27 - 1pm - 5pm

Apr 28 - 9am - 4pm

Info: Pat Knight (757) 479-2115

Email: kemts@cox.net

#### **May 4 & 5 - Wisconsin**

Oshkosh Violet Society,

33rd Judged Show & Sale

St. Jude the Apostle Church Hall

(corner of 5th Ave. & Knapp St.)

Oshkosh, WI

May 4 - 10am - 4:30pm

May 5 - 11:30am - 3:00pm

Info: Kevin Degner

(920) 426-3764

Email: kevin\_degner@sbcglobal.net

#### **May 4 & 5 - NEW JERSEY**

Garden State AVC

62nd Annual Show/Sale

May 4 - Noon - 4pm

May 5 - 11:00am - 3pm

Mercer County Community College

1200 Old Trenton Rd

West Windsor, NJ 08550

Info: Paula Bal

GSAVCmail@gmail.com

Facebook: Garden State

African Violet Club

Website: [http://www.](http://www.princetonol.com/groups/gsavc/)

[princetonol.com/groups/gsavc/](http://www.princetonol.com/groups/gsavc/)

#### **May 4 & 5 ILLINOIS**

Glenview/NorthShore AVS

10am to 4:30pm

Display, Sale &

Educational Exhibit

Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Illinois

Info: rggoodsell@gmail.com

#### **May 4 & 5 New York**

African Violet and Gesneriad

Society of WNY Judged Show/Sale

Galleria Mall, Galleria Drive

Cheektowaga, New York

May 4 - Noon - 6pm

May 5 - 10am - 4pm

Info: Judith Niemira

judith.niemira@gmail.com

#### **May 4 & 5 - OHIO**

Cincinnati AVS Show/Sale

Eastgate Mall, Interstate 275

and State Route 32 (Ohio)

May 4 - Noon - 9pm

May 5 - Noon - 5pm

Free Admission

Info: Penny Wichman:

pennypwic@aol.com

Al Cenci: acenci@cinci.rr.com.

#### **May 10 & 11 - MARYLAND**

Baltimore AV & Gesneriad Club

60th Annual Show & Sale

The Shops at Kenilworth

800 Kenilworth Drive,

Towson, MD

May 10 9am - 7pm

May 11 9am - 5pm

Free Admission

Info: Shirley Huffman

(301) 854-2021

Email: bshuffman2@aol.com

#### **May 10 & 11 - OHIO**

Parmatown AVC

Judged Show and Sale

Parmatown Mall

7899 W. Ridgewood Dr

Parma, OH

May 10 - 12:30pm - 9pm

May 11 - 9am - 5pm

Info: Lori Hilfer (440) 582-4310

Email: rahilfer@roadrunner.com

#### **May 11 - Wisconsin**

Sundowners AVC & Crosstown AVC

Annual Spring Sale

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

3330 Atwood Ave

Madison, WI 53704

Hours: 9am - 3pm

Info: Alice Peterson

(608) 298-7324

Email: peters56@tds.net

#### **May 11 - CALIFORNIA**

Tri-Counties AVS

Display and Sale

Messiah Lutheran Church

4861 Liverpool Street

Yorba Linda, CA 92886

May 11, 2013

9:00am - 4:00pm

Info: Diane Miller

(714) 281-4339

violetmiss@aol.com

#### **May 18 - NEW JERSEY**

AVC of Burlington County

Judged Show/Sale

Medford Leas

Retirement Community

1 Medford Leas Way

Medford, NJ

Hours: Noon - 5pm

Info: (856) 488-6190

Email: Nbraidis@aol.com

AVCBC.PBWORKS.COM



# *The African Violet Society of America, Inc.*

## **AFRICAN VIOLET MAGAZINE**

### Advertising Rates and Deadlines

(Effective January 1, 2013)

#### **DEADLINES**

JAN/FEB ISSUE	NOV 1	JUL/AUG ISSUE	MAY 1
MAR/APR ISSUE	JAN 1	SEPT/OCT ISSUE	JUL 1
MAY/JUN ISSUE	MAR 1	NOV/DEC ISSUE	SEPT 1

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#### **INTERNET WEB PAGE**

Commercial members and any advertiser who purchases six consecutive ads may have his/her business listed on the AVSA Web Page and also have a "hot" link to their page if they provide a reciprocal link to the AVSA page. No process has yet been developed to place advertising on the Internet at this time.

# Getting closer....AVSA 2013 Convention in Austin!

By Penny Smith-Kerker

First Austin African Violet Society is very excited about hosting the upcoming AVSA 2013 convention. I hope everyone has seen the convention information on the AVSA web-site?

A great line-up of tours and presentations are in place I hope you will come to Austin early in the week, so you can spend some time exploring Austin and the surrounding area. Look over the convention information and get your registration in soon!

You have all been working on your plants, haven't you? I know you're all going to be excited about all the gorgeous horticultural entries and designs.

Susan Hill and the Show Chairs are planning unique staging and making room for LOTS of entries, so let's fill up the showroom!

Be sure to make your travel plans and mark your calendars to be in **Austin May 26 - June 2, 2013** as we celebrate "Violets Dance Across Texas."

## **AFRICAN VIOLET BEAUTIES** *From the Beautiful Ozarks?*

I still have many old favorites, plus many

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See our supply catalog + violet list at  
[www.violetshowcase.com](http://www.violetshowcase.com) or send \$1 to above address







*The Association for  
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Quarterly Magazine  
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## Hobby Greenhouse Association

8 Glen Terrace, Bedford, MA 01730-2048  
Dues: USA \$19 (Canada and Mexico, \$21 US funds/MO)  
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Sample magazine \$3.50  
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Hours: 10:00 AM until 5:30 PM  
Tuesday thru Saturday or by appointment  
ph. 620-402-6282  
email: patty@ppa.kscoxmail.com



*Achimenes, Aeschynanthus, Chirita, Columnnea, Drymonia, Episcia,  
Kohleria, Nematanthus, Petrocosmea, Sinningia, Streptocarpus... These  
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Purchase our 56-page manual "How to Know and Grow Gesneriads" for US\$10 postpaid anywhere, or join The Gesneriad Society for one year for US\$25 in USA, US\$30 elsewhere. Go to [www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org) or send check or credit card number with expirations date and CVV code to The Gesneriad Society, Dept AVM, PMB 637, 1122 E Pike Street, Seattle, WA 98122 USA. New members receive a copy of "How to Know and Grow Gesneriads," two back issues and the next four quarterly issues of our journal *Gesneriads*, a package of mixed gesneriad seeds, access to the world's largest source of gesneriad seed, and many other benefits.

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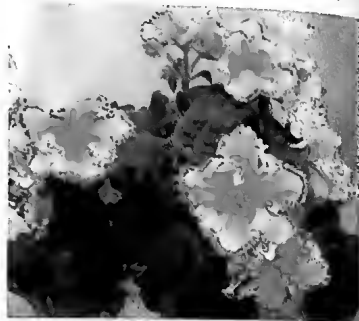
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By Linda Hall, President

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This is my last message to you as President of AVSA. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you. Many things have happened over the last two years, some you see and some are behind the scenes working for you. The biggest is the website, which has your greatest concern. Winston Goret-sky and his committee have been working behind the scenes, adding the beautiful photos you all have wanted. They will be available very soon; if they are not visible by the time you receive this magazine. This has been a daunting task and Winston and his committee deserves much thanks. I'd also like to thank Richard Nicholas and Tom Glembocki for their efforts in moving the website forward.

I hope I will be seeing you at convention in Austin. I can't wait for the tours – especially the "bat" one. As usual, look for me at the front of the sales line on Thursday. I hope to see some of my past friends from the front of the line. Will you be there? This will be my 25th convention. I



have only missed one in 26 years. My very first convention was in Dallas, TX, in 1988 and I have been hooked ever since. I truly enjoy seeing all my old friends and every year I make new ones. I have a wonderful violet family!

I would like to say a special thank you to all my committee chairs that work so tirelessly on volunteer time for you. What would we do without our wonderful office staff – Jenny and Amy, and Ruth, our editor. Thank you ladies for all your hard work! Thanks to the members of the Executive Committee who give so much of their time for our society. And I would be remiss if I didn't thank the man who keeps me grounded and is always there for me when I need an ear to listen. Thank you, Albert, for being a great husband!

See you all in Austin!

*Linda*

*President Linda*



# Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

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Thanks so much to our members who are contributing more articles to the AVM, and to those Affiliated clubs that share their publications with me! Again, I am very fortunate to have experienced growers like **Neil Lipson** and **Ronn Nadeau**, share information to help our members. Neil has researched material for another in-depth article to help growers of African violets – "Water Quality, pH, and Water Treatment" can be found on page 22.



Neil will also be giving me a hand at the convention, so if you spot him snapping your picture at the awards banquet, a presentation, or out and about on a tour, you may find yourself in the AVM convention collage.

The members of the African violet clubs in Neil's area are fortunate to have him photograph their shows. In this issue, he shares photos from the Philadelphia show and from the Delaware club's show.

You'll find Ronn's submission, "INSV, African Violets, and *Nicotiana benthamiana*," on page 16. I found this particularly interesting with all we have learned about INSV in the past couple of years. I had never heard of using an "indicator plant" for detecting INSV.

Also, if you have photos of your plants, or plants that others exhibited at your local club, please consider sharing them. Remember that they must be at least 300dpi and 1 MB in size if digital. If you have some great snapshots of plants, send them to me and I can scan them. Please remember to select an uncluttered background, and if they are show plants, remove the stake from the pot. Also, no show ribbons or happy faces.

The photos must be "true," with no digital alteration. Our readers deserve to see the plant as

it actually is, not altered. Thanks for your cooperation with this.

If you would like to submit an article to the AVM, please do! Long or short, it doesn't matter, I always need new material.

I want to encourage all of our members to support our advertising AVSA Commercial members. We do so appreciate them!

It's been six months since we moved the *African Violet Magazine* back to be printed in Beaumont, by our friends at **Becker Printing**. Many of you know that Becker previously printed the AVM for decades. The company is now owned by **Todd McKinley**, a very good friend, as is our typesetter, a wonderful, sweet lady named **Shirley Jones**. It's a pleasure to work with them both.

In my last column I admitted that I plant impatiens in my flowerbeds every spring. Yep, I do. I know a lot about INSV (Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus), and I'm not worried about growing impatiens, because I don't grow African violets at home. I just don't have time. Even with the long winter, by our standards in Southeast Texas, so many of the "annuals" I planted last year and the year before, are up again and blooming.

I look forward to seeing you in Austin. You'll enjoy trying our *real* Tex-Mex food and exploring the Texas Hill Country. History buffs will find the area a treasure-trove of historic sites, and for photographers the stunning scenery; the lakes, and hills await you!

See you in Austin!

Ruth





# Removing Suckers

By Joyce Stork

The most difficult part of removing suckers is learning how to identify them at an early stage when removal is much easier. Suckers appear between the leaf axils (the place where the leaves attach to the main stem of the plant). Since flower buds also appear in the same places, it is necessary to allow the sucker to develop four leaves before it is removed. Flower stems will only have two leaves. It requires regular looking to spot the suckers at this early stage because they do not disrupt the pattern of growth or give you another signal.

Once you see the four tiny leaves, use a pointed object (I prefer a pencil) to gently prod out the sucker. If you can maneuver the pencil point under the lowest leaf of the sucker, it can often be popped out as a tiny plant with all of the little leaves still attached together. If it comes out in little bits, gently dig at the same spot to make sure that the growing point is gone. If the sucker isn't discovered until it gets larger, the leaves of the sucker may entangle with the main plant which makes it a little more difficult to remove.

Often you will be able to tell there is a big sucker present because it will push up against the main plant's leaves so that the leaves are not all laying flat in the ideal rosette. In this case, you must look

closely to determine which leaves belong to the sucker. Again, try to maneuver the pencil (or whatever tool) so that it is behind the bottom leaves of the sucker and then pull the pencil toward you so that the sucker pops free.

If it doesn't come out in one neat piece, dig gently with the point to remove any of the sucker that might remain. If the growing point isn't removed, it will regenerate. If the sucker reaches a size that is comparable to the original plant, you will have to divide the plant. This is done by cutting between the two (or more) plants. Typically, a plant that needs to be divided will look like a disorganized bush with leaves going in all directions.

When dividing, you often must sacrifice leaves so that you can isolate each crown of growth (a crown has tiny leaves in the center surrounded by increasingly larger leaves that all formed from the same center). Each crown can be potted to grow on its own, even if no roots are attached. Simply place them on top of moist potting mix and place them inside a clear sealed container (I use a plastic bag) for about a month. Happy Growing!

From the AVSA Website FAQs

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## Why Are African Violet Leaves Fuzzy?

By Joyce Stork

There are several advantages that are credited to African violets' fuzzy leaves.

1) The nap (or the direction that the hairs lean) is toward the tip of the leaf, away from the center of the plant so that raindrops tend to run off of the plant instead of into the crown where the moisture could lead to rot.

2) The hairs provide a sort of air blanket against any changes in air temperature which are common in nature. Violets thrive at 72°F, with a range of five degrees above or below.

3) Larger chewing pests, like beetles, are held

above the actual plant tissue by the hairs. When they try to feed on violets, they get an undesirable mouthful of fuzz and soon move on to other easier food sources. The entire Gesneriad family (which includes African violets, but also *Episcia*, *Gloxinia*, *Achimenes*, *Streptocarpus*, etc.) is characterized by some degree of fuzz on the leaf. All photosynthesis goes on in the surface cells of the leaf itself, so the hairs do not impact photosynthesis.

From the ASVA Website FAQs



# Pot Alternatives

By Paul Kroll

Over the past several years I have had the opportunity to present talks to several different groups on African violet and gesneriad culture, propagation, grooming for show(s), etc. as well as container gardens. One of the things those in the "audience" seem to enjoy is my suggestion for pot alternatives.

Allow me to explain:

We have all used the infamous Solo Cup for years. Many exhibitors grow and exhibit their plants in them. There are other possibilities out there. African violets and gesneriads are rather shallow rooted, so why not use the plastic containers sold for restaurant use? Different sizes



*These are some of the different sizes I use.*

from one or two ounce to those holding larger portions are readily available at restaurant supply stores. They are packaged in sleeves holding 50 or 100 containers. I purchase them often in



*This photo shows the openings made with scissors. Some folks use a soldering iron to burn holes, but I prefer the slits.*



*These are containers that have been painted with Krylon spray paint designed for plastic. The color is exactly the same as our green pots.*

various sizes and cut slits at the bottom edge to allow drainage. I use them for propagation, for growing and – with some preparation ahead – for exhibition!

There is a spray paint marketed especially for plastics (patio furniture, etc.) which is available in white and in a green color which is almost exactly the same color as the green pots so many of us have used for years. I spray paint several of the containers (usually without drainage holes) and slip pot my plants into them for entering in shows. It works like a charm!

Look around and investigate the restaurant supply stores in your

small plants of just the right size.

area. I know you will find these containers and you will be surprised at their reasonable price.

I also utilize the plastic six-packs in which annual and vegetable plants are sold in the spring. I wash them out and use them for propagation purposes. Fill them with your propagation mix and then place them into a tray. Take cuttings of your plants six or eight weeks before you need tiny plants for your container gardens and when you are ready to assemble them, you have



*This photo shows the container in which the plant grows slipped into the painted pot, ready for entry into a show.*

## Future Conventions:

Austin, TX, May 26 - June 2, 2013

Nashville, TN, May 25-June 1, 2014

# In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

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A question that came in from one of the e-mail groups for African violets asked for an explanation of what was happening when a green foliage plant developed red pigment on the backs of the leaves. Was this a birth-mark mutation, or was this because of a change in culture?

African violets with green foliage can develop red color in their leaves when a gene for making the red pigment in the epidermal cells in the lower surface of the leaves becomes active. If the plant has only one copy of this gene, the expression may not occur, and the foliage will be predominately green. However, under certain environmental conditions such as strong light, high minerals, or stress from being pot bound, the gene may be activated, and the foliage will become red backed. The red color is usually seen on the edges of the leaf as if the leaf had been dipped in pink paint. The red areas lack distinct borders and fade or gradually blend into the green areas. The cause in this situation is cultural and can likely be reversed if growing conditions are changed.

Sometimes, plants will develop bold red spots or strong irregular red areas on the backs of the leaves. This is the birth marking mutation. The red areas usually have sharp borders and transitions between red to green are distinct. This is a genetic mutation where the red pigment gene has been activated in random areas of the leaf. The mutation can persist and be passed on to offspring produced through leaf cuttings. Cultural changes will not return the plant to solid green. However, if a mostly green leaf is chosen for leaf cuttings, the babies may lose the mutation and return to the solid green color of the original plant.

The plant discussed by the e-mail group was stripped of its older red leaves and repotted. The new foliage showed the original green color and lost the red backing. Additional questions con-



firmed that the red coloration in the removed leaves had been more of a "pink wash", not distinct spots with sharp borders. In this case, the cause of the red backing on the leaves appears to have been cultural. Perhaps the plant was over-due for repotting and the resulting stress activated the red pigment gene producing the red pigment in the older leaves. Repotting restored the cultural conditions and the original solid green coloration.

If my counts are correct, this column marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my producing this column. Thanks to everyone who has supported this column by sending in questions. Your interest in plant genetics has hopefully produced some of our new hybrids and will continue to do so for a long time in the future.

## *Q: What should one cross to produce a trailing African violet?*

A: The easiest way to produce trailing African violets is to cross two trailers together. This conserves the trailing habit in the offspring. However, you may wish to combine some new trait into a trailing growth style. In these cases, cross your non-trailing plant on the strongest trailer you can find. The F1 offspring will probably not trail as much as you would like, but hopefully they'll show some trailing tendencies. Crossing the best F1 with itself or two good F1 plants together should produce some F2 offspring with good trailing habits. Another route is to backcross a strong F1 to the trailing parent or perhaps a new trailing plant.

Although we do have a number of good trailing plants now, a hybridizer for trailers might consider crossing on to the trailing species plants. My "Yesterday's" series were produced using trailing species plants. It was generally possible to get good trailing habits in the F1 offspring this

way, although the blue/purple flower color of the species plants will dominate and only blue flowered offspring will be produced. Crossing to a hybrid F1 species trailer to a trailer with pink or white flowers should allow other flower color types to be produced and maintain the trailing growth habit.

***Q: What would you suggest as a "new" characteristic to try for in trailers?***

A: I might suggest trying to develop trailers with good coral or coral red flowers. I don't think many of our current trailers have as good of colors as the standards in those shades. I would start by crossing a pink trailer to a good coral red standard. The F1 offspring will probably lose the trailing habit and might have regular pink or red flowers. Crossing to the F2 generation should restore the trailing habit and bring out the recessive coral and coral red colors. Be sure to grow out a large number of seedlings of the F2 cross as the odds of producing the combination of trailing and coral red flowers will be low.

***Q: Someone suggested that I shouldn't use a plant with large flowers in crossing for a trailer. Why did they suggest that?***

A: Large flowers need strong peduncles or bloom stalks to support the weight of the flower and carry them well above the foliage. The peduncles of most trailers are thin and wiry, unable to support the weight of large flowers. I suspect that was the reason for the suggestion. Offspring from the cross probably wouldn't have strong enough peduncles to support large flowers. That's not to say that trailers with strong peduncles can't

be developed, however, so you might try crossing with large flowers and select for strong peduncles in the offspring. I think many growers would like to see the flower size increased in our trailers.

***Q: Does flower color inherit the same way for trailers as it does for standard African violets?***

A: Yes, as far as I can determine, flower color inherits the same way regardless of if the plant is a standard, a trailer, or a miniature.

***Q: How does one cross for the different sizes of trailers?***

A: Trailers are categorized by the size of the leaves, not by the size of the plant or the length of the trails they produce. If you want miniature trailers, only use parent plants that are miniatures or miniature trailers. Try to use parents that have the smallest leaves possible. This attention to leaf size will usually keep the F1 offspring in the size category you want.

However, don't be surprised if crossing two semi-miniature plants (standards or trailers) produces a mixture of offspring that run from very large to very small in leaf size. Leaf size in African violets follows an additive or incomplete dominance pattern, and two semi-miniature plants can produce a range of offspring sizes depending on how the traits recombine in the offspring. Luckily, leaf size can often be determined when the plants are still fairly young and large growing plants can be eliminated quickly if the hybridizing goal was for smaller plants. Likewise, choosing the smaller seedlings will help select quickly for small growing plants.

**The AVSA Library Complete List of Rentals  
can now be found on the AVSA Web Site.  
[www.AVSA.org](http://www.AVSA.org)**



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## ***Jolly Orchid***

*Exhibited by: Lorna Russell*

*Hybridized by: H. Pittman*

*Miniature*





## ***Neptune***

*Exhibited by:*

*Kevin Degner*

*Hybridized by:*

*Armacost & Royston*

*Large*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



## ***Ramblin' Amethyst***

*Exhibited by:*

*Diane Page*

*Hybridized by:*

*E. Champion*

*Standard Trailer*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



# Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

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A name reservation costs \$1.00 (\$5.00 for non-members) for each plant, and is valid for two years, after which time it may be extended two years for an additional \$1.00 (\$5.00 for non-members). Registration of the plant is \$5.00 (\$25.00 for non-members) unless completed within the reservation period, in which case the balance is \$4.00 (\$20.00 for non-members).



## Belinda Thibodeaux – Patterson, LA

### 'Cajun's Beautiful Oblivion' (10572)

01/11/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble purple frilled star/pink and white fantasy. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, plain. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Blue Jean Queen' (10573) 01/11/2013

(B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble dark blue pansy/pink fantasy. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, plain, heart-shaped. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Blueberry Hill' (10574) 01/11/2013

(B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble-double blue frilled star/pink and white fantasy. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, plain, heart-shaped, serrated. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Cha-Ching!' (10575) 01/11/2013 (B.

Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble dark blue pansy/pink and white fantasy. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, plain/red back. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Cherished Hope' (10576) 01/11/2013

(B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble pink star/variable raspberry fantasy. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, pointed/red back. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Dixie Pride' (10577) 01/11/2013 (B.

Thibodeaux) Double pink frilled star/variable thin raspberry edge. **Variegated** dark green,

cream and pink, plain, heart-shaped, serrated/red back. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Drama Queen' (10578)

01/11/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble dark blue frilled pansy/pink and white fantasy. **Variegated** medium green, white and pink, plain, serrated. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Ethereal Fairy' (10579)

01/11/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single purple sticktite pansy/pink fantasy, white upper petals, ruffled white edge. Medium green, plain, wavy. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Fascinating Fury' (10580)

01/11/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble-double blue frilled star/pink and white fantasy. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, plain, heart-shaped, serrated/red back. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Flamboyant Mistress' (10581)

01/11/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble coral-pink frilled pansy/darker pink top petals, variable thin raspberry edge. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, plain, heart-shaped. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Freckleface Kid' (10582) 01/11/2013

(B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble-double pink frilled pansy/variable raspberry speckled edge. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, plain, heart-shaped. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Frisky Whiskey' (10583) 01/11/2013

(B. Thibodeaux) Single dark blue sticktite pansy/pink and white fantasy. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, heart-shaped, serrated/red back. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Hot Expectations' (10584)

01/11/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Double hot pink star/variable raspberry speckled edge. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, plain, heart-shaped, serrated/red back. **Standard**

### 'Cajun's Kyle Trail' (10585) 01/11/2013

(B. Thibodeaux) Double white star/purple eye.  
Light green, plain, heart-shaped. **Semiminia-  
ture trailer**

'Cajun's Sundowners' (10586) 01/11/2013 (B.  
Thibodeaux) Semidouble bright pink wavy  
pansy. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink,  
plain. **Standard**

#### REGISTRATION CHANGE

The following has been changed by the Plant  
Registration Committee:

'Dolores' **Ruth Elizabeth**' (10569) Change  
registration number to 10571.



### AVSA BOOSTER FUND

**Shirley Berger** • 2822 S. Mainsail Dr. • Avon Park, FL 33525-6032

**Total Contributions: January 1 - February 28, 2013**



#### Fantasy

Tampa African Violet Society, Tampa, FL  
*A match for an anonymous donor*



#### Geneva

Ohio State African Violet Society  
Sylvia Singh, Tiburon, CA



#### Multicolor

Bill Foster, Mesquite, TX  
*Life Member Donation*  
African Violet Society of Minnesota  
*In memory of Donna Tobin*  
First Austin African Violet Society, Austin, TX  
Meredith Hall, Marlin, TX  
*Life member donation*  
Patricia Huffman, Carmichaels, PA  
The Spent Blossoms of Mid-Polk County, FL  
*In memory of Anna Coley*



#### Two-tone

The African Violet Council of Southern California  
*In memory of Donna Kirkland*  
Mrs. Grace W Bailey, Virginia Beach, VA  
Shirley A. Davis, Fort Myers Beach, FL  
Delores Gibbs, San Marcos, TX  
Diane Green, Lockport, NY  
*Life member donation*

Mel Grice, Englewood, OH  
Robert Kurzynski, Clifton, NJ  
Elizabeth D. Lebert, Clinton, CT  
Linda A Neumann, North Royalton, OH  
*Life member donation*  
Jane Wyatt, Nacogdoches, TX  
*Life member donation*



#### Thumbprint

Harold Bartley, Springfield, OH  
*In memory of Betty L. Bartley*  
Debra Carey, Wilmot, Canada  
*In memory of Doris Bent*  
Mary Corondan, McKinney, TX  
Alice R. Dulaney, Broomall, PA  
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Phyllis Nash, Riverside, CA  
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Stella A. Richardson, Riverside, CA  
Kirstin Schellhamer, Womelsdorf, PA  
Linda D. Schuessler, Loudon, TN  
Sweet Water African Violet Society, Bay Shore, NY  
Judy Walton, The Villages, FL  
Charlotte Wolfe, Ann Arbor, MI

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS: \$1475.00**

# A Family Portrait

By Georgene Albrecht

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*Sinningia* 'Lil Georgie' (sin-IN-jee-a) is a micro miniature, tuberous gesneriad. They are very easy to grow if culture is consistent. The tiny tubers are covered with fibrous roots that resent extreme dryness, fertilizer salt build-up, and water saturation. This hybrid is a cross between *Sinningia concinna* X *S. musciola*. Jim Steuerlein was the hybridizer. He says it is fertile, however, my seed pods have almost no seeds, unless they scattered without me noticing. I grow it with ease, inside and outside of containers, but there are more blooms and seedpods on the one grown in a small glass bubble covered with plastic wrap.

Fifty percent humidity will keep them happy. Remember to remove all moisture from the foliage if you are enclosing them. During the winter when the hot air furnace is running, those in two-inch pots are dropped into a glass enclosure with a vent hole in the plastic wrap.

Potting them in fresh soil is always welcome. A typical soilless mix is good if it has tiny pieces of damp, whole Canadian sphagnum moss added. If a tuber is in trouble or will not come out of dormancy, wrap this damp moss around it. This will help prevent rot and keep both moisture and air around the tuber. Plant it near the soil surface and always be careful to put the concave indentation top side up. Avoid watering this indentation. I also avoid using New Zealand sphagnum moss because the fibers are too large to use on these micro plants and it breaks down too rapidly.

Do not remove all of the growth from the tuber. Do not allow it to go dormant because chances are it will never break foliage growth. If the plant is



old and the growth starts to get scraggly, remove the top portion with at least four leaves. In a few weeks this usually forces new growth from the tuber. Root the cutting in any medium and contain it in a plastic bag. Remove the bottom leaves, and roots usually emerge at that point. After the cutting has bloomed, it will start to swell near the base of the stem and form a tuber. Trying to grow one from a leaf cutting proved impossible.

Never allow a bloom to decompose on foliage because rot will surely set in. Never pull on a flower stem because it is so secure that the entire growth will let go. My plant came from Dave's African Violets. He usually has a lot of these micros for sale. Remember, too, the Gesneriad Society has a seed fund for their members. There are few tiny plants that are this easy to grow in a container. At times, they have not



Photo Credit: Georgene Albrecht

needed water for months. The secret is a lean soil mix and medium low light between 500 and 800 foot candles.

Seeds are extremely fine. Sow them on damp milled, finely cut, sphagnum moss and mist them gently with a tepid spray of water. Cover them with plastic wrap and watch the green magic. When they have two or more leaves, take tweezers or a dibble to separate them. If they are tightly intertwined, submerge them in room-temperature water and shake gently until they come apart. They never need a huge amount of soil around them. When established, chop some moss and cover the soil surface to prevent foliage from touching where fertilizer tends to build.

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Inc. Australia

**When you go on holidays, how do your plants get watered?** Put your plants on wick watering or get someone to drop by and give them a little drink now and then. If you are going away for a long holiday, you could put your plants on wicks and use large reservoirs, like ice cream containers.

**What do you do when your violet is dry and limp?** Don't swamp your plants with water, especially not cold water, as this could cause marked leaves. Don't leave saucers full of water for long periods of time. Water gradually (give a little water at a time). A good idea is to give a mist of spray (with hot water) over the foliage as well as a little watering.

**What will you do if you have saturated your African violet's potting mix?** If you have inadvertently swamped your plant, stand the pot on newspaper till the excess water has drained. Allow the potting mix to almost dry-out before re-watering. If your plant develops root or crown rot from sitting in swampy potting mix, you will need to take a crown cutting to save your plant.

**Should the wick be lying on the base of the pot, be inserted into the soil mix, or right through the soil mix to the surface?** The consensus of opinion is that it does not matter where the wick is placed as long as it makes good contact with the potting mix.

**Should African violets in unusual containers be groomed and benched as Show plants or can they be more informal?**

The plant and the container are judged on "overall look." The plant however, should always be clean and without dead or faded leaves.

**How do I know if my plants are too close to the light?** If you notice tight centers developing or leaves turning down, you know that they are too close. This takes a little while to show up. One suggestion is to place a tissue over the center of the plant for a week, and if the center opens up, your plant is too close. Move the plant lower or reduce light time. The plant should be about 10" (25cm) from light tubes. This is measured from the top of the foliage to the light tube.



Photo Credit: Alcie Maxwell

***Saintpaulia  
confusa  
Mather E***

*Exhibited by:  
Alcie Maxwell*

# INSV, African Violets, and *Nicotiana benthamiana*

By Ronn Nadeau, PhD

In an article in the January/Feb 2013, issue of this magazine, I proposed a three-part program for protecting African violets from attack by INSV-carrying western flower thrips. Now that spring has arrived, and thrips and other pests are getting plentiful, the plant protection steps that I discussed in my earlier article should be kept in mind.

In this article I will discuss how INSV and other viruses can be spread by *mechanical transmission*, a plant pathology term that means accidental or deliberate transfer of virus particles from an infected plant to a "clean" plant. With African violets, this could happen accidentally if one groomed a clean-looking but virus infected plant, and then used the same tool to groom a truly clean plant. Unfortunately, such a scenario is a real possibility because INSV is easily mechanically transmitted and can exist in a plant without showing symptoms. To prevent unintentional transmission, use of bleaching water (diluted 1:10) to soak tools between plants is recommended by workers in virology.

But there is a good side to mechanical transmission. Plant virologists use an indicator plant, *Nicotiana benthamiana* (*Nb*), to determine whether a sick plant contains a virus because practically all plant viruses, including INSV, cause visible damage to *Nb* foliage when inoculated with an extract from a virus containing plant. (See photos of *Nb* plants by googling "nicotiana benthamiana images".) One easy method for inoculating *Nb* plants, called agroinfiltration, is shown in a YouTube video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHc7PU\\_jG2M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHc7PU_jG2M).

So, if one has a diseased-looking plant and suspects INSV or other virus as the cause, he can extract a part of the plant showing symptoms, apply the extract to a leaf of an *Nb* plant, and wait

about a week to see if the treated *Nb* leaf shows disease symptoms. Ideally, the experiment would include a known diseased plant and a known clean plant as controls.

If the inoculated *Nb* leaf shows disease symptoms, it indicates that virus particles were transferred from the plant under test to the *Nb* plant, and therefore, the plant's problem is likely caused by a virus. Confidence in that conclusion would be high if the control parts of the experiment behaved as expected. However, if the extract does not cause damage to the *Nb* plant, it is unlikely that the plant's problem is due to a virus.

It will be interesting to compare *Nb* test results with ELISA INSV test results. For example, will there be cases in which samples test ELISA INSV negative but *Nb* positive? If the INSV strain that is detectable by ELISA has mutated, the new strain would probably not be detected by the very specific ELISA test, but would likely be detected by the quite nonspecific *Nb* test.

Around a month ago, I put in a request for *Nb* seeds from the USDA Agricultural Research Service, Germplasm Resource Information Network (ARS-GRIN). After submitting an outline of how I planned to use the seeds (as described above), I was sent a small but adequate amount of *Nb* seeds (Accession number PI 555684), and I planted some of them. (The seeds look like African violet seeds, but are a bit bigger). The seedlings are now growing under fluorescent lights and are ready for transplanting to small pots.

To conduct the experiments, I will need help from African violet growers. If you now or later have any African violets that appear diseased or suspicious, please contact me by email at [avseeds.com](mailto:avseeds.com) so we can discuss the symptoms. I might ask you to send me the plant.





# It's Almost Time to Dance Your Way to Texas!

By Penny Smith-Kerker • Photo Credit: Glenda Williams

In just a few weeks, the 2013 AVSA National Convention will convene in Austin, Texas. By now, many of you have made your hotel reservation, sent in your convention registrations, and have made your arrangements to travel to Austin. If you haven't done any of these things yet, there is still time, but act now. We want to see you in Austin!

First Austin African Violet Society started our journey to the 2013 convention in the spring of 2010. After three years of discussion, meetings, planning, more meetings, recruiting, fundraising, and even MORE meetings, the waiting is almost over! The Renaissance Austin hotel is beautiful: lovely views and easy access to shopping, restaurants, and parking.

The 2013 Convention offers a great set of tours, so you can see for yourself why we Texans are so proud of our state. Some very interesting and unique programs have been arranged so you can go home with new information to improve your skills as growers and judges. Then of course, there is the commercial sales room where you can let yourself go crazy purchasing incredible plant material and supplies. In case you need to ship something home to make more room in your suitcases for all your salesroom purchases, there will be



United States Postal Service flat rate boxes, shipping labels, and packing supplies available at the hotel. And, probably most important, you don't want to miss the joy of being with friends who share your passion for African Violets and other Gesneriads.

There are a few things you should remember as you pack and prepare to come to Austin.

It's likely to be pretty warm at the end of

May/early June; the average May high temperature is 87 F with an average low temp of 67 F. So bring clothes for warm weather, although you will find that everything is very well air-conditioned (I keep a sweater or light jacket with me most of the time in spring and summer.) Historically, May is also our rainiest month. But with the drought we've had in the area the last few years, you won't find many locals complaining if we have a bit of precipitation while you are here. Austin is a very casual city, so no need to dress up, unless of course you want to, and we love "quirky", so pack accordingly.



One final reminder: Remember to pack your designs and your **many** horticultural entries! The Show Committee has a great design schedule, unique staging, and is prepared for a large number of entries; let's fill the showroom to overflowing!

Whether you like ballet, ballroom, or boot-scootin', strap on your dancin' shoes and we'll see you in Austin the week of May 26, 2013, as "Violets Dance Across Texas".



# Behind the Scenes in Design

By Karyn Cichocki and Paul Kroll

At the 2012 Ohio State AVS convention, we presented a program that we had done previously for the New York State AVS and for the African Violet Society of Canada at their conventions. The program had been well received previously and was again at OSAVS.

Our program was very informal and well-attended. We talked about all aspects of doing design for AVSA shows, and referred to doing so for Gesneriad Society shows as well. The basic ideas are the same, but in Gesneriad Society shows, gesneriads must predominate. Both of us grow many gesneriads to use in design. What better plants for compatibility than "other" gesneriads?

We began our program by talking about the items every designer needs:

- A hot glue gun (or a cooler temperature one)
- Glue sticks
- Extension cord
- Tape of various kinds:  
duct, masking, floral, double-sided, clear, etc.
- Pins:
  - straight, tiny, large corsage pins, etc.
- Pin Frogs: various sizes available (pricey, but worth it)
- Small pen caps, needle covers, etc. to use as water-holding vessels for flowers
- Wire of various gauges and lengths
- Various sizes of scissors
- A small syringe to fill water vessels used for blooms
- Pipe cleaners – white, black and colored
- Stickum – various colors are available in rolls.  
(Keep in a sealed plastic bag to keep them from drying out.
- A roll of paper towels
- A spray bottle filled with water (for container gardens)
- A gallon of distilled water (for underwater arrangements)

- A box or "kit" of some kind to hold all the above supplies

It is recommended that the "construction" of designs be done at home and spray-painted there. These pre-constructed "holders" for the designs can then be carefully put into a box and merely set into the niche or table space assigned. It is so much easier and saves a lot of time doing all the preparations at home.

If backdrops are to be used, they should be ironed in most cases. Hanging them over a large coat hanger with a towel underneath will assure that they arrive in good shape. Crisp, flat backdrops always make a design look its best.

Sometimes paper of various colors may be chosen instead of fabric. Be aware that *it is not allowed to tape things to the niches*; the surface of most niches will be ruined when tape is used. Some other form of attachment must be utilized if paper is chosen.

For cut flower arrangements, be certain you take blooms from a plant that has been recently watered so that pedicels are turgid. Using a plastic box with a wet paper towel placed in the bottom, lay cut blossom stems in carefully, and they will keep for quite a while. Always take extra blooms with you for replacement.

For plant arrangements, be sure that the plant is a healthy one and that it will look good as opposed to "straggly," taking away from the overall presentation of the design. Be certain that you use the proper-sized plant.

Read the schedule and then read it again. Be certain that you measure everything you need and that your arrangement does not exceed the measurements in any dimension.

From *The Violet Connection*,  
Publication of the Ohio State AVS



# Air-Layering Your Leggy African Violets

By Sharon Rosenzweig

Many of you are probably familiar with rejuvenating an old African violet with a long neck. The common practice is to cut off the root ball leaving about 1- 1/2" of the neck, scraping off the dried brown stuff until moist green tissue is showing, placing the scraped neck into potting mix and cover, with a plastic bag. This method puts a lot of stress on the plant while it is trying to make new roots.

Another method of re-establishing an old plant with a neck is to air layer the neck.

The first step is to remove outer leaves until the plant is no more than six inches in diameter. Clean the stem of stubby leaf bases and scrape the dried bark until moist green tissue is showing.

Wrap moist (not wet) sphagnum moss firmly around the stem. Cover the moss with plastic wrap, making sure it fits tightly both above and below to prevent it from drying out. Use twist ties to secure the plastic on the top and bottom. (Image A)

Treat the layered plant the same as you would any other African violet. However, periodically check the moss to be sure it has not dried out. If it dries, moisten with a gentle spray of water.

After about two to three weeks, the sphagnum moss should be filled with roots. (Image B) When the plant is well-rooted, cut the neck just below the ball of moss and roots and place in a pot of suitable growing mix. Water and cover with a plastic bag for a week to ten days. Remove the plastic bag when the plant seems firm in the pot.

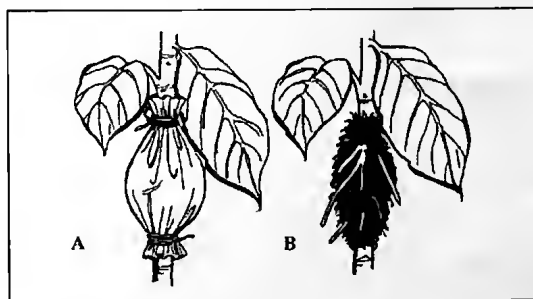
The advantages of air-layering are:

Little or no risk of losing the plant,

Shock to the plant is minimal,

The plant will have a new root system,

The plant will produce new growth and flowers sooner.



From *Ye Bay Stater*,  
Publication of the Bay State AVS

## What's in a Name?

By Joe Bruns, AVSA Registration Chairman

It is almost impossible to accurately identify an African violet that doesn't have a name tag or other type of identification (a "NOID," or a plant with "no ID"). The African Violet Master List of Species and Cultivars (AVML) and the First Class computer program lists more than 16,000 different named African violets and their descriptions. Depending on your NOID, you could find a few dozen that match the characteristics. You might even be able to narrow it down to four or five. But then you would need to choose one of them, and it would be highly unlikely that you would choose the correct name. Besides that, the AVML has less

than half of the named African violets. Even if you found a photo that matched your plant exactly, the odds are great that it is not your plant. So many African violets look the same, and they all grow differently under different growing conditions. It is definitely a mistake to try to identify a NOID in this manner. There are already far too many misidentified African violets out there now. (Just ask anyone who has done classification and entries at an African violet show.) Please don't add to the problem.

From the AVSA Website's FAQs

# Packing Plants for Safe Mailing

By Helen Williams

Many people like to trade small plants with friends to get a few new varieties, but not everyone knows how to pack those little plants to guarantee a safe trip and survival until they reach their new home. Here is a foolproof method you can try.

Before starting you will need a kitchen garbage bag or something similar that you can cut squares out of. Plastic food wrap is too thin, unless you use Press n Seal. You will also need some polyester fiberfill, the kind you use to stuff pillows, or some polyester batting. You can substitute cotton batting, crumpled facial tissues, or round cosmetic cleaning pads sold in drugstores, but they won't work quite as well.

You will also need to buy a package of disposable Styrofoam coffee cups at the supermarket, about an 8 or 10 ounce size, depending on the size of the plant you need to protect.

Have the plant groomed and the soil in the pot moist, not soaking wet. Remember, the plant could be in the mail for more than a week. Try to have the pot as nearly filled to the brim with soil as possible – *do not try this with a half empty pot.*

First of all, gently tuck a bit of your poly filler under the leaves and around the stem covering the soil. Now cut a slit halfway through the center line of the plastic square you have prepared. The size of the plastic square depends on the size of pot you

are using. It needs to completely cover the pot and have several inches of spare plastic at the bottom. Place the plastic around the pot with the stem of



the plant in the center point of the slit you made, wrapping it securely around the pot and pulling it snug. Twist the excess plastic at the bottom into a twisted tail and tape it securely so it doesn't come apart when you release it. Leave the tail hanging straight down.



Now punch a hole in the bottom of one of your coffee cups and thread the tail through to the outside. A crochet hook comes in handy here. Slowly but firmly pull the wrapped plant down into the cup by the tail and tape the tail to the side of the coffee cup so the plant can't move around.



Finally, take a second coffee cup and gently work it over the first one, tucking leaves up into the top cup. Tape both cups together.

If you've done this correctly, the resulting package can be tossed across the room with

no damage to the plant inside, and the Styrofoam cup will also provide a small measure of insulation against temperature fluctuations. Tuck your little cup packages into a carton, and you are ready for the post office.



Reprinted from *Chatter*,  
Publication of the AVS of Canada, and  
Lakeshore African Violet Society of  
Toronto *Newsletter*



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

***Take it at  
the Bridge***  
Design by: Danny Tidwell

# Water Quality, pH and Water Treatment

By Neil Lipson

One of the areas that many growers need to address is water quality. This includes particulates, pH, and other factors. I will be discussing what these factors are and what can be done to correct them.

To start off, you should determine the hardness of the water in parts-per-million, or ppm. To do this, the HM Digital TDS-EZ Water Quality Tester is a no-brainer. It is \$15 on Amazon and is a breeze to use. Pull the cap off, put it in the water, and press. I get my water from Aqua in Springfield, PA, and my reading is 187ppm of TDS which is **total dissolved solids**. This is a total of all the chemicals in the water, and, to see what is the breakdown of the TDS, you would download the water quality report of your local water supplier. This number will be somewhat higher than the hardness PPM but is a good starting point in determining the dissolved solids. Now, remember, the water quality may change somewhat between where the filtration plant is and your house, and this is where the meter comes in handy.

For fun, I ran the water through a deionizer unit, and it dropped from 187 to 20. I then ran it through a second time and it was down to 10, which is close to distilled. I then checked rain water, which was rain that ran off the roof, and it was 7ppm. Considering that it came off the roof, that was a low number. Next, I got the jug of distilled water and that read 2ppm, which is in the noise range of the meter. When I checked the fertilizer water with 1/8 tsp of fertilizer, it was 351ppm, so all of this makes good sense.

Go to your water company's website and download the water quality report. Pay particular attention to chloramines. The number should be less than 1.0 ppm for African violets. Chloramines do not dissipate as quickly as chlorine, and they will affect your plants. Letting the water sit for a period of a week will take care of some of the chlo-

ramines problem and will lower it about 50%. If you have a large amount of chloramines in your water, then you will need water treatment or use another type of water for the plants. What I do is dilute my tap water, one to one, with rain water and that cuts the concentration in half, which gives me about 0.6 ppm. You can test the water on a yearly basis with the HM Digital tester to see if the filter needs replacing. By the way, you can't take the water quality report and add up the ppm numbers to get the total. It doesn't work that way. A \$15 meter will solve this for you.

For water treatment, there are high quality systems that remove contaminants from the water and bring the **total dissolved solids** (TDS) to a low number. One of the manufacturers for which I have reliable info on their filter product is Environmental Water Systems (EWS).

EWS makes a whole house filter, the CWL 1354-7000, which installs at the main water line and removes contaminants from all the water entering the home. This protects both the African violets and the people who live in the house. In areas where chloramine is used, it is best to select the CWL 1465-7 instead, which excels in chloramines removal. The good part about the EWS filters is (1) they don't remove the natural minerals, (2) you'll never have to buy bottled water again, and (3) they last 7-10 years.

For the budget conscious and those who only wish to treat violets and other plants, it is best to select either an EWS model ESSENTIAL DWS or an ESSENTIAL SS. The ESSENTIAL DWS is a compact, three-stage filtration system that uses the highest grade carbon available in any sink unit today. It is capable of removing chloramine, chlorine, pesticides, VOCs, THMs, sediment, and more. This is the ideal system for most budget conscious situations and requires a filter replacement once per year. For very limited space and urban environments, the ESSENTIAL SS is a

single-stage filter that will remove the major contaminants. The ESSENTIAL SS may require more frequent filter replacements and is not ideal for homes on well water or with heavier sediment. Both filtration systems remove contaminants but keep natural minerals intact. They are easy to install.

*I spoke to Tony Vanario, the rep for the company, and he has offered readers of the AVM a discount on these units. He can be reached at 718-317-8500 (ext. 219) or tvanario@richmondtile.com. For example, the sink model ESSENTIALS, which normally lists at \$459 is discounted to AVSA members for \$299.*

In speaking to Pat Hancock, for whom I have a tremendous amount of respect, she told me to try rainwater. I switched for my upcoming show and will tell you the results. I'm including in this article a photo of my violets taken today, two weeks before my show. Pat has a wealth of knowledge with violets, and I am honored to have her as a friend. I strongly suspect the chloramines-free rain water has a lot to do with incredible blooms and growth.

Now, I will discuss pH. The correct way to test is with a pH meter that is calibrated. Do not use litmus paper testing, which is too crude. For fertilizer efficacy, you want a range of 5.8 to 7.6, but for optimal growing, a pH of 6.7 is the best way to go. Also remember that repotting reduces fertilizer salts, which are close to 7 and are not detected well by a pH meter, as it is a salt. If you see orange "crust" on the side of the pot, that is fertilizer salt, and it's not good for the plants. Keep in mind that sphagnum or peat moss becomes more acidic over time.

Any water that has been treated to remove TDS, contaminants, etc., including deionized water and distilled water, will have a theoretical pH of 7.0. However, even freshly distilled water will absorb carbon dioxide and will cause the pH to drop as low as 5.8. This is not a concern as this is a totally "unbuffered" and very mild acid that will not affect the plants. By "unbuffered," I mean that the low pH has no "punch" to it and will not

change the pH of the soil.

The way I use my meter is to first calibrate it with the pH 7.0 and pH 4.0 solutions and clean the probe with a Q-tip. Get 2 cups of water, one with diluted bleach, and the other with deionized water (distilled will work). I spray the soil with some deionized water and lightly push the probe into the soil until I get a stable reading. Sometimes I have to poke a few times to get a good reading. I then rinse the probe with the diluted bleach solution and rinse again with the deionized water. This is to get stable readings, and also to avoid spreading insects. Now, if this sounds like a pain, well, it is. There are some growers who actually enjoy this procedure, and I know both of them.

When I called the Scotts Company, they spent some time explaining to me the correct way to check your soil. The "professional" method is to get 10 grams of soil, let it dry, mix it with 10ml of distilled water, let it sit for 30 minutes, and then test it with the pH meter. This is called the 1 to 1 method. It is also so time consuming that I use the other method as a fast check.

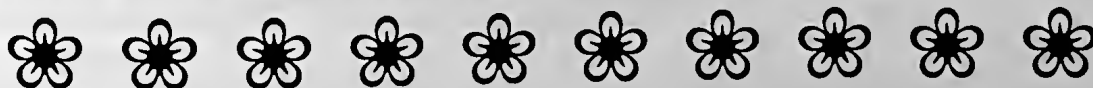
Remember that pH meters have a probe that MUST be kept in distilled water and cannot dry out, even once. If it does, you must replace the probe at about \$25-\$40. This adds to the aggravation, let me tell you. I calibrate the meter every time I use it, and you must have the solutions fresh and ready. This is a commitment, one that most people don't want to be bothered with.

When the glass bulbs of the older units dry out, there are micro-cracks, which cause huge drifts in the pH readings. Only buy them with the understanding that they demand more frequent calibration. At one time they made "dry" pH meters, which did not need many of these concerns. They seem to have disappeared from the market, sad to say.

This is a quick course on water quality and treatment, so all of you can grow better violets.

*Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant.*

*He can be reached by emailing him at ndlipson@gmail.com or calling 610-356-6183 after 1 pm Eastern time. He will return your call.*







## ***Pink Dove***

*Exhibited by:*

*Doris Brownlie*

*Hybridized by:*

*S. Sorano/*

*Lyon Greenhouses*

*Miniature*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



## ***Streptocarpus 'Fernwood's Jiminy Cricket'***

*Exhibited by:  
Lorna Russell*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Ness' Angel Blush*

*Exhibited by: Beverley Williams*

*Hybridized by: D. Ness*

*Miniature*

# Recessive Genes – A Hybridizer's Nightmare

By Pat Hancock

I'm sure many people know by now that in my younger days I bred and showed miniature poodles. In the early 1970's, I received an order from a gentleman in Germany for a black male miniature poodle measuring 16" at the withers and a five-generation, all black pedigree. At that time, in Germany, the state was in control of the breeding of dogs. There was a long list of requirements, measurements, and background that had to be met, including a complete set of teeth. Luckily, I had such a dog that was oversized by the American standard but perfect for the German standard. I went about getting all the paperwork translated into German and sent him off to Germany.

The interesting thing about the solid black pedigree was that I knew that in every generation on the pedigree there were brown puppies born. Brown is recessive to black. In each litter, I had kept black puppies because there is often a shyness gene connected to the brown color and the black dogs do better in the show ring.

About two years later, I received a phone call from the man in Germany bragging about the number of shows he was winning with all of his beautiful brown poodles. He had no idea where they were coming from because his females were all black too. Obviously, they carried the brown recessive gene just as did the male he bought from me.

I tell this story to illustrate the importance of recessive genes.

Recessive genes are forever; they never go away. They are the reason that brown-eyed couples have blue-eyed babies, and they are very strong in African violets.

African violets have been hybridized since the late 1940's and without knowing the pedigree or background of the two violets you want to cross, you really have no idea of what recessives they might carry. If they carry the same recessives, even from generations removed, they may hit,

and you will get a "big surprise." I started crossing African violets in 1992, and I have had many such surprises. If you cross a blue or purple violet to a blue or purple violet, it is pretty sure you will get a lot of blue or purple violets. However, working with multi-colored or fantasy blossoms becomes more complicated. Of course, fantasy blossoms are my favorites, and working with them can be most surprising and sometimes disappointing.

About three years ago, I crossed Paul Sorano's 'Live Wire' with 'Buckeye Midnight Kiss,' a plant with watermelon red blossoms and variegated foliage. My dream was a red fantasy blossom on variegated foliage – WRONG! To my great surprise, about 80% of the seedlings bloomed white – beautiful foliage and white blossoms. Several were pale blue or blue or purple white multi-color and one was blue with fantasy. Not at all what I had planned!

Some hybridizers will tell you what plants are behind their hybrids; some will not. It is somewhat helpful, but almost impossible, to know what recessive genes are there.

The two crosses that were most predictable for me were: 1. 'Marching Band' x 'Buckeye Broiderly' – This is the cross that produced 'Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler,' 'Buckeye Cherry Topping,' and others that begin with 'C.' This was a great cross where I could have kept almost everything. They had very beautiful, predictable blooms and great foliage.

2. 'Picasso' x 'Buckeye Bridesmaid' – This seed pod had so many seedlings that I "farmed" a lot of them out for other people to grow. Two of those that Chris Leppard grew out were 'Buckeye Seductress' and 'Buckeye Scrumptious.' This was a great cross, and I could have kept many more than I did. All of the 'S' Buckeyes are from this cross.

My latest cross was Paul Sorano's 'Outer Limits' x 'Buckeye Lucky Irish.' I held my breath when

doing it because of the white fantasy on 'Outer Limits.' I didn't need any more white violets.

So far, I am happy with them. They are not white! Several are blue with the fantasy markings, and they picked up the green edge from 'Buckeye Lucky Irish.' Time will tell, but right now they look promising, and they aren't white.

Lastly, I did not write this to discourage you from hybridizing. I think everyone should try at

least one seedpod. It is truly the most fun that you can have in African violets, and I would encourage you to try it.

However, don't be surprised if those recessive genes give you something you didn't expect – it might be the "greatest" one yet.

From *The Violet Connection*,  
Publication of the Ohio State AVS

**"And the winners are ..."** 434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069  
By **Mary J. Corondan** Email: [mcorondan@yahoo.com](mailto:mcorondan@yahoo.com)

**PARMATOWN AVC, OH – Winners:**  
Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rebel's Splatter Kake, Rhapsodie Cora, Heart's Aflutter; 2nd Best Mini/Semi Collection: Eternal Orbit, Lucky Ladybug, Rob's Combustible Pigeon; Best Standard: Rebel's Splatter Kake; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Combustible Pigeon; Horticulture



Sweepstakes, **Martha Bell**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Chilly Willy, Frosted Denim, Rob's Jitterbug; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy, **Tracy Lorence**. Best Trailer: Rob's Willa-wong; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Ron Masa**. Best Gesneriad: *Kohleria* 'Manchu', **Mark Occhinero**.

## Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

Janet Riemer

256 Pennington-Harbourton Rd. • Pennington, NJ 08534

November 1 – December 31, 2012 • Total this period: \$575.00



### Geneva

Barbara Burde  
Chuck Bingham



### Multicolor

Delaware African Violet &  
Gesneriad Society

*In lieu of speaker's fee  
for Libby Behnke,  
Nancy Murray and  
Bobbie LaFashia*

Richmond African Violet Society  
*In memory of Helen Pangola*



### Two-tone

Kathy Lahti

*In memory of Donna Tobin*  
African Violet Club of  
Southern California

*In memory of  
Henry Matsukane*  
First African Violet Society of  
Denton (TX)

*In lieu of speaker's fee  
for Ben Haning*  
Hi Country Judges Workshop  
F. Eleanor Mattaliano  
African Violet  
Society of Minnesota



### Thumbprint

West Texas African  
Violet Society  
*In memory of  
Barbara Fillingim*  
Sharon Gartner  
Ralph Mancusi  
Mary Corondan  
Robert Kurzynski  
Dr. Richard Nicholas  
Glenda Curry  
Marion Hamtil  
Judy Walton  
Marie Glass  
Corky Reichmann



*Photo Credit:* Winston J. Goretsky

## *Von's Small Gift*

*Exhibited by: Doris Brownlie*

*Hybridized by: Y. Lambert*

*Semiminiature*



*xPhinastema*  
*'California*  
*Dreaming'*

*Exhibited by: Bill Price*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



*Dishgarden*

*Design by: Judy Smith*

*Photo Credit: Neil Lipson*



# 2013 VACATION GUIDE

These AVSA commercial members would be happy to have you visit them when you are in their area. They are listed here by state. Please carefully note the contact information, hours, and if visits are by appointment only. Enjoy the education and inspiration that visiting these businesses will afford you!

## Georgia

### Travis' Violets

Travis Davis  
2064 Ellen St.  
Ochlocknee, GA 31775  
229-574-5167 (day) or 229-574-5236 (night)  
E-mail: travisviolets@aol.com  
9 - 5 (Mon - Sat) with appointment.  
African violets.  
[www.travisviolets.com](http://www.travisviolets.com)

## Kansas

### Patty's Plants and Antiques

Patty Daniel  
920 Millington  
Winfield, KS 67156  
620-402-6282  
E-mail: patty@ppa.kscoxmail.com  
10:00 AM - 5:30 PM Tuesday - Saturday,  
1:00 PM - 6:00 PM, Sundays by appointment,  
closed Mondays  
We have over 5,000 sq of antiques, African  
violets & gesneriads, begonias, ferns, miniature  
terrarium plants, & exotic finches housed in  
an historic old post office one block east of  
Winfield's Main street at the corner of 10th  
and Millington.  
[www.pattysplantsandantiques.com](http://www.pattysplantsandantiques.com)

## Missouri

### Dave's Violets

David Harris  
1372 S. Kentwood Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65804-0220  
417-887-8904  
E-mail: plantman@ipa.net  
By appointment only  
Sinningias, African violets, and other gesneriads  
[www.davesviolets.com](http://www.davesviolets.com)

## Nebraska

### Kent's Flowers

Kent and Joyce Stork  
2501 E. 23rd Ave. S.  
Fremont, NE 68025  
402-721-1478  
E-mail: kentsflowers@gmail.com  
Monday through Saturday 9:00-5:00  
(September-May)  
Monday through Friday 9:00 - 5:00 &  
Saturday 9:00 - 1:00 (June, July, August)  
African violets, some supplies  
[www.kentsflowers.com](http://www.kentsflowers.com)

## New York

### Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses, Inc.

Paul Sorano  
14 Mutchler St.  
PO Box 249, Dolgeville, NY 13329  
315-429-8291  
E-mail: info@lyndonlyon.com  
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM (Mon-Fri)  
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM (Sat)  
Noon - 4:00 PM (Sundays, May and June only)  
African violets, gesneriads. Located just ten  
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## In Memory

### Iris Keating

The African violet world lost one of its most dedicated enthusiasts when Iris Keating passed away in March. An AVSA Life Member, Iris was a grower, exhibitor, designer, artist, and photographer, sharing her expertise graciously and with seemingly endless energy and humor.

Whatever project she took on got her complete focus and meticulous attention to detail. Her artwork provided show staging and graced the covers of club yearbooks and show schedules, as well as the printed version of the *AVML*. She wrote creative schedules, a syllabus for new clubs eager to put on a show, and "how-to" articles on a wide range of gesneriad-related topics. Iris was a regular convention attendee. She was AVSA Plant Registration Chairman and helped computerize the *MVL*. Besides being a Master Judge, she also held nearly every office in the Pomona Valley AVS, the AVC of Southern California, and the Judges Council of Southern California. Iris Keating was always

a class act and her sharing spirit is her lasting legacy.

### Linda Wheaton

The African violet world recently lost one of its outstanding growers. Linda Wheaton passed away in March. She was a member of the Spring Branch AVC of Houston and the Lone Star AV Council. Linda grew beautiful plants, always winning top awards. She had recently retired from Shell Oil and looked forward to devoting more time to her violet hobby, but it was not to be.

Linda had grown violets for a number of years but was relatively new to African violet organizations. She joined Spring Branch AVC in 2005, and immediately got very involved with club activities. She enthusiastically gave programs and shared her knowledge of our beloved plant. She wholeheartedly participated in shows, serving on various show committees, including that of show chair. Linda became an excellent AVSA judge and enjoyed judging. For the past several years, she held the office of Treasurer and Computer Expert for the Spring Branch club. She was also the convention chair for the 2012 LSAVC convention. Linda enjoyed attending several AVSA conventions, including the Detroit convention. She will be dearly missed.



*Photo Credit: Neil Lipson*

## *Orchard's Bumble Magnet*

*Exhibited by: Bobbie LaFashia*

*Hybridized by: R. Wilson*

*Miniature*



*Photo Credit: Neil Lipson*

## *Rob's Fuddy Duddy*

*Exhibited by: Phyllis Haggerty*

*Hybridized by: R. Robinson*

*Semiminiature*

## 10 Common Mistake New (and More than a Few Experienced) African Violet Growers Make

By Mary S. Schaeffer

Albert Einstein defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results. Alas, when it comes to growing violets it's not only new growers who fall into the "insanity" trap; it's also more than a few seasoned growers. Typically, the grower in question is short on time and tries to take a "short cut", only to end up with less than stellar results. Take a look at the following list and see how many of these mistakes you've made in the last year. With a little bit of luck, you'll recognize the issues and avoid them in the future.



- 1) Not labeling a plant because "I'll remember what it is and label it tomorrow." Inevitably, tomorrow never comes and you forget. Then when you're getting ready for a show or sharing a leaf, you have no idea what the plant in question is. This forces you to put the much dreaded NOID (no identification) label on it.
- 2) Making a label with a piece of white paper and writing on it with ink. On the face of it this seems like a logical step. Won't ink last longer than pencil? Unfortunately, it won't. The sun fades the ink, and after a while, you'll have a nice blank white strip of paper attached to the pot. Always write your labels in pencil or permanent markers.
- 3) Putting a leaf or cutting in a glass of water confident you'll pot it up tomorrow. Before you know it, several months will have gone by and you'll have violet babies peeking out of that water. Or worse, you'll forget to replenish the

water and the leaf will shrivel to nothing. Alas, this mistake is frequently married with the first one on this list. 4) Skipping a potting size, rationalizing that the plant will end up in a four or five inch pot, so why not put it there to start with? This is one everyone should avoid. If you put the violet in a pot too large, the plant will just sit there more focused on growing roots

than leaves and flowers. What's more, the chance of rotting the roots increases tremendously under these conditions. Stick to the old one-to-three rule – leaving the plant in a pot slightly too small instead of a pot too big. As many are aware, the one-to-three rule states the violet should be in a pot that is one-third the size of its diameter.

- 5) Not purchasing a plant at a chapter show only to regret passing it up later. Too often we get home and obsess about the violet that got away, the one we didn't buy. Since violet shows and sales typically only last a day or two, you can't go back next weekend to pick up the item you neglected to buy. So, think very carefully before leaving local shows.
- 6) Purchasing too many plants at an event and then squashing them in among other violets, giving none of the plants enough space to grow properly. This is the reverse of the problem mentioned above, and to be honest, is probably more common. Let loose at a violet sale, many violet enthusiasts grab every plant that appeals to them without giving any

thought to the space they have at home to grow their new beauties.

- 7) Not segregating a plant when it was first purchased figuring you knew the seller or "it's only one plant, how much damage could it do?" The answer to that question is "a lot." New plants should be segregated for a month or longer until you are certain they have no disease or bugs. One infected plant can ruin an entire collection – so don't take chances. Surely, you have room in front of a window in a guest room or other room not normally used for plants. All new plants should be segregated until you are certain they are disease and bug free.
- 8) Being too critical of your own plants when selecting entries for a show, only to have a plant that is not nearly as well grown as yours go off with a Best in Class crown. If you walk around a crowded plant show, you will inevitably hear people noting that "I have better plants than that at home." And, they probably do. But violets left at home not entered in a show will never win a ribbon. So be less critical of your plants and always bring at least one or two, if not more, to your chapter shows.

9) Failing to clean a pot before entering a violet in a show. Cleaning a pot is easy. It doesn't take any skill. And a dirty pot detracts from the plant and will keep it from earning the ribbon it should. A really easy way to handle this task is to slip pot the plant. Buy a new sparkling clean pot and slip your violet, pot and all, into the new pot.

10) Hovering over your plants giving them too much water and repotting too often. To be fair to the experienced growers reading this, this mistake is rarely made by seasoned growers. Their problem is usually just the opposite, finding the time to water and repot in a timely manner. But, new growers anxious to take proper care of their new violets do tend to overwater and repot before the plant really needs it. Violets will do better with a little benign neglect than they will with too much care. More violets are killed due to overwatering than any other cause. So err on the side of watering and repotting too infrequently rather than too often.

Have you fallen into any of the traps discussed above? If you have, don't fret. You have plenty of company.

### Membership Application

Application for Membership Recommended by \_\_\_\_\_ Mem. # \_\_\_\_\_

The African Violet Society of America, Inc.

2375 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702

www.avsa.org

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# Leaf Propagation

Article and Photos by Jim Toms

Propagation of African violets to gain more plants of the same variety is normally done by leaf propagation. In fact, everyone seems to know that African violet babies come from leaves. This fact makes African violets relatively unique in the plant world as species that can be propagated by leaf are uncommon.

To propagate the variety you have chosen, you must take a leaf from the parent plant. Take the leaf from one of the middle ranks of leaves. Leaves from the outer row are too old and feeble to give you many plantlets. Those closer to the center are too immature. Snap off the leaf close to the base of the stem. Then take a clean, sharp knife and cut the stem about 3-4 cm. (1-1/2 in.), less for the small varieties, from the base of the leaf at a 45 degree angle to the stem so that the cut surface faces the same general direction as the top surface of the leaf.

Old-fashioned water rooting is not recommended. Roots will grow in water, but these roots are weak and must be totally replaced by the plantlets when they are transplanted to soil. Medium to coarse grade vermiculite and perlite mixed and a little activated charcoal added is an excellent rooting medium. Fill a small pot with such a

medium, moisten it, make a hole for your leaf, and tamp the medium around it. Keep the medium evenly moist with the same fertilized water solution you use for your plants, and you will soon have a clump of plantlets.

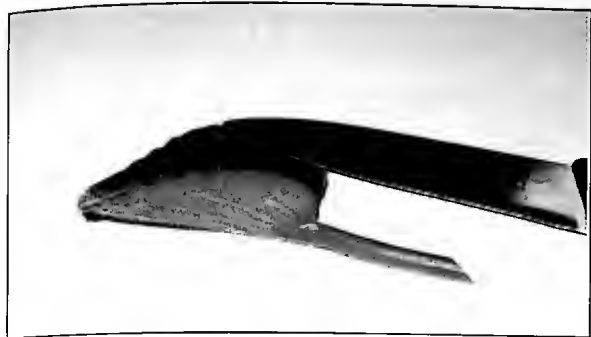
When the plantlets are ready to pot, you may break up this clump and put each plantlet in its own pot of soil. Some growers specify an actual height that the plantlet should achieve before you break up the clump; others express this height as a ratio of the plantlet's height to that of the mother leaf. No need to be so complex. A plantlet should have four clearly developed leaves before you attempt the operation. Few with less will survive. Tools for this surgery can include sharp knives, but some only use their fingers. Experience will tell which works best for you. There are no rules except to ensure that each plantlet takes its own root system.

Be patient when growing plantlets from a variegated leaf. These plantlets are usually all white at first. (See bottom right photo.) Wait until the little leaves show substantial green, which slowly appears. An all white plantlet will not survive.



*Choose your leaf from a middle rank of leaves.*

From the Newsletter  
of the Lakeshore  
AVS of Toronto



*Cut the leaf stem at 45 degree angle to the leaf surface.*



*Insert the leaf in moistened starter mix in appropriate size pot. Provide a transparent cover to boost humidity. It can be a tray cover or just a single "baggie."*



*Watch for baby plantlets. It will still be weeks before you can pot them. These pictured are still too small.*

## Something Strange is Growing in There

By Joe Meyer

I've been told that I have an interesting way of starting my leaves. I start inside a Gatorade bottle; the finished product becomes a mini-terrarium. The top of the bottle is cut off, a mixture of charcoal and perlite an inch deep is placed in the bottom and covered with two inches of dampened potting soil (half AV potting soil & half perlite). Depending on the size of the leaves, I can start four to six leaves this way. I place a plastic baggie over the top and place the mini terrarium 5" under the lights in the middle of the light stand.



This is where it gets a little strange. I was checking to see if there were any babies starting to grow when I noticed something strange poking through the soil around the mother leaf. It took me a while to realize what I saw; there were three flower buds poking through the soil! A week later I checked again and found an additional flower bud. Now there were a total of four. It took an additional two weeks until leaves started pushing their way through along with a beautiful blossom. The mother leaf is from 'Sticky Spring Trail'.

# IMPORTANT NOTICE: SENIOR JUDGES

Senior Judges may apply for a renewal examination between May 1 and September 1, 2013. Send request to Meredith Hall, P. O. Box 370, Marlin, TX 76661. Include check for \$5.00, (payable to AVSA) and proof of three blue ribbons as per AVSA Handbook, 2011 Edition, page 88. Allow three weeks for delivery. **Examinations may be received by attachment using Microsoft Word if requested. Please specify if it will be used as electronic copy or handwritten hard copy. A printed hardcopy (not email) of the exam must be returned to Meredith Hall by October 1, 2013 for grading.**

Those Advanced Judges who meet the requirements and wish to apply for their first Senior Judge examination send check for \$5.00 (payable to AVSA) to Mrs. Hall. Also send the following items of documentation of eligibility per AVSA Handbook.

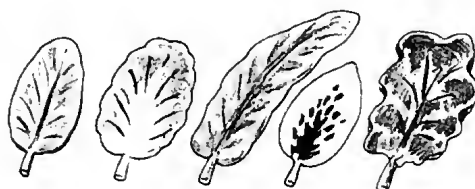
1. List of all judging schools attended, grades, etc.
2. Signed schedules of five AVSA shows judged, (copy of signed title page with all show information is sufficient)
3. Verification of three blue ribbons earned, per AVSA Handbook, 2007 Edition, page 88. Allow three weeks for delivery. Schedules and cards will be returned if a SASE is included with proper amount of postage. Applications postmarked after September 1, 2012 will be returned and application may be made next year.

**No exams will be returned until after October 15, 2013.** Please include email address, and you will be notified of receipt of exam, or include a self addressed postcard and it will be returned upon arrival of exam.

**Meredith Hall**

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## AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

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 Lynn Vaillancourt



### Two-tone

AVS of Minnesota  
 Shirley Davis  
 Francis Ratte  
 Judith Neumann



### Multicolor

Eileen Stannard

# WHY IS MY PLANT NOT FLOWERING

By Sue Gardner

This question is the most asked at our meetings. People buy a lovely flowering African violet, and then it stops flowering. This becomes very frustrating because they usually grow these plants to enjoy the flowers.

There are several reasons why African violets do not flower, but the real secret is that "happy, healthy violets" grow and flower for most of the year. To produce a happy, healthy violet we need comfortable conditions - light, mild temperatures, enough food and water, a good home (i.e. pot) and cleanliness. A little love helps! Ask yourself the following questions.

## 1. Does my plant have enough light?

If your violet is stretching its leaves toward the light, petioles are elongated, or leaves are yellowing, the indication is that there is inadequate light. Plants grown in natural light need to be within 12-16 inches (30 - 40cm) from the glass. Windows facing the morning sun or north-facing windows are best in Melbourne. However, a bright window in another location may have sufficient light. Avoid hot sunlight to prevent burning of the foliage.

Plants need at least 10 - 12 hours of light each day to stimulate flowering. Fluorescent lighting is a good way to provide sufficient light for growth and flowering. If you do not have a light stand, you can achieve reasonable results by placing your plant under a fluorescent desk lamp for the required time. Place your plant so that there is a distance of 10" (25cm) between the top of the plant and the lamp. Remember also that a dark period of at least 8 hours stimulates the flowering cycle.

## 2. Does my violet enjoy correct humidity?

Humidity of 50 - 70% is best for good healthy blossoms. If humidity is too low, buds will dry out and die even up to the time of opening. Wick watering can help to increase humidity and solve

this problem. On very hot dry days, mist your plants with a fine spray of warm water.

## 3. Is my plant too cold or too hot?

If you answer "yes" to this question, you will need to change the temperature to a more comfortable one. African violets like the temperature in a which humans feel comfortable and will stop flowering in very cold or very hot weather. You may move your plants to an area which has a more suitable temperature ie, 60°-80°F (15°C to 25°C).

## 4. What about food and water?

If your plant is starving, it will not flower. Likewise, if the plant does not receive a regular supply of water, small buds will dry out and die before they develop. Wick watering ensures that your plant receives constant food and water. A good balanced fertilizer added to the wick watering reservoir will be best for flowering. N.P.K. values of 15:30:15 as in Gro Max, Manutek, etc are suitable.

## 5. Can I see signs of pests and disease?

Keep an eye on your plant to detect any pests or disease. A sick plant does not flower well. Thrips are the greatest pest of blossoms. Powdery mildew is the most common fungus disease of blossoms.

Deal with these problems quickly to avoid infecting all your plants.

A few other points to keep in mind are-

- *Allow your violet a short rest period between flowerings of at least a few weeks.*
- *Make sure it is not close to a natural gas appliance as the pollution can affect growth and flowering.*
- *Choose a plant that is known to be a good bloomer!*

From the Newsletter of the  
Early Morn AV Group, Inc. Australia

# *Designing in Detroit*



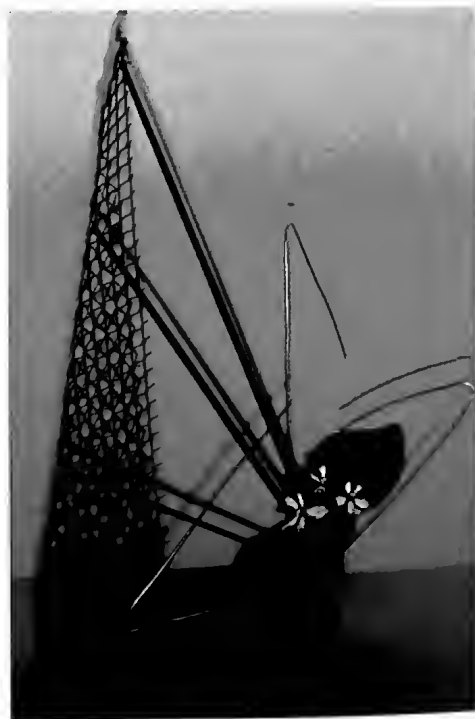
*Capitan's Bridge*  
*Danny Tidwell*



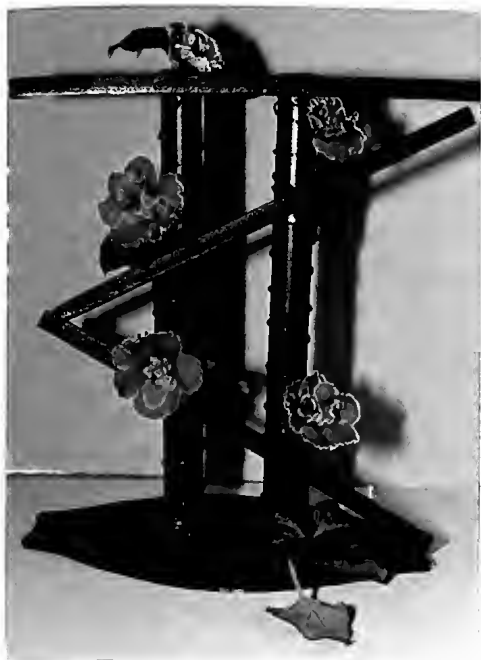
*Covered Bridge*  
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*Rickety Bridge*  
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*Arch Bridge*  
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*Beam Bridge*  
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*Bridge Game*  
Randy Deutsch



*Double Deck Bridge*  
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*Rainbow Bridge*  
Paul Kroll



# Question Box

By Ralph Robinson

P.O. Box 9 • Naples, NY 14512

Email: [robsviolet@aol.com](mailto:robsviolet@aol.com)

As is always the case, we are far too busy to reply to mail (or e-mail), though we do read all of it. Should you want a personal reply, we are more than willing to answer phone calls made during our normal business hours (12-5 pm EST), since we can work and talk at the same time. For those with access to the Internet, we can be reached at [robsviolet@aol.com](mailto:robsviolet@aol.com), via our web-site at [www.violetbarn.com](http://www.violetbarn.com), or via our Facebook page. The web-site also contains a wealth of information (and answers to many of your questions).



**Question:** *I am trying to start an African violet from a leaf. There are lots of roots and the leaf is quite healthy looking, but there is no growth above the soil. What have I done wrong and what should I be doing?*

Answer: You didn't say how long ago it was rooted, so it may just be a matter of time. Usually, you'll begin to see the beginnings of plantlets within eight weeks, but some can take longer, sometimes much longer if the environment or condition of the leaf isn't ideal. Propagation of African violets from leaf cuttings is relatively easy, one reason why so many people, like yourself, grow them. It is a learned skill, however. You get better at it with practice and after having failed at it a few times. Being in business requires us to be pretty good at it (and we've already experienced all the failures), so we'll pass along a few observations and tips that we hope can be helpful.

Start with healthy, mature (but not old) leaves. Outermost leaves on an old, "necky" plant in need of repotting are usually not the easiest to root and produce plantlets. If it's a variegated variety, you may use a leaf with variegation, but it should show at least some green (not be completely white). Roots and plantlets will appear from the cut end of the petiole (leaf stem), so

doing this properly makes some difference. Use a clean, sharp tool to cut the petiole. We use an "x-acto" blade or surgical knife. Scissors or fingernails generally aren't sharp enough to make a clean, precise, cut. Cut the petiole at a 45-degree angle; cut side facing upwards. This will provide a greater surface area from which roots and plantlets can emerge. To encourage plantlets to appear sooner, cut the petiole no more than 1/2" from the base of the leaf blade-for minis and smaller leaves, no more than 1/4". If the petiole is cut too long, this means the plantlets will need to travel that much further to break through the soil surface.

To keep the leaf itself from growing and, instead, encourage plantlets to form, trim away or remove the tip or outside portion of the leaf blade. If the leaf blade can't grow, it will be forced to produce roots and plantlets sooner, not later. By trimming leaves, you'll also make it possible to root multiple leaves per pot, but still giving emerging plantlets space and light. They won't be obscured and shaded by large leaves and will develop more quickly.

When rooting leaves, use a very light, porous, rooting media. On this, everyone will have their own recipe, anything from all vermiculite or perlite, a mix, or some variation on a basic potting mix. We use our basic soilless mix, but with about triple the amount of vermiculite. The objective is the same-you want a mix that will hold moisture, but evenly, and with lots of porosity. Enough moisture for roots and plantlets can form, but not so much that they'll rot. You also want to make it easy for emerging plantlets to make their way up through the soil to the surface. This means a soil that is loose and not packed. Though we tend to use very "firm" soil when we pot plants, when filling leaf cutting pots, our instructions are "scoop the soil, tap the side of the pot (to settle it), then brush the excess (don't press) from the top."

Moisten the media before rooting the leaves. It should be moist - not soggy.

For containers, small pots are preferable to flats or large containers, for a couple of reasons. First, identification-it's just too easy to mislabel leaves when there are many of them. Also, plantlets more likely will appear sooner when the cutting's roots fill, or begin to fill, the pot. Depending upon size and number of leaves, we'll use either 2 1/4" or 2 1/2" pots, each pot containing one or more leaves of a given variety. When placing leaf cuttings into the (moistened) soil, do so at a slight angle (not vertical), so that the top of the leaf blade is visible from above and plantlets (should) emerge in front of the blade, not hidden behind it. Though the soil itself should not be firm, the cutting should be firmly in the soil - i.e. not easily knocked loose. Rooting hormones, which can be helpful with woody, difficult to root plants, are of little benefit for propagating African violets, which are soft-tissued.

Once done, place the pot and leaf (or leaves) into a clear, sealed, container. Plastic sandwich bags, deli or bakery containers and the like work fine. The additional humidity will help protect your cutting during the time it has yet to produce roots and can easily wilt. Being sealed, this also means you won't have to water your cuttings. Place the cuttings in moderately bright (not in hot sunlight) location with moderate "room" temperatures. Additional warmth or "bottom" heat is not necessary and only increases the chances of cuttings rotting in their moist environment. If all goes well, you'll soon see babies poking out from the soil surface. At this point you can, though don't need to, remove the pot of cuttings from the sealed container. When they appear large enough that you can confidently handle them, separate the plantlets from the original cutting and pot them individually.

**Question:** *I received three miniature violets as a gift from a friend yesterday. I would like to plant them into a terrarium, but after reading the instructions that came with the plants, I'm wondering if I need to bury the plants in their original pots, rather*

*than remove them from the pots to plant them? I refer to the directive that says miniatures shouldn't be planted/replanted into pots any larger than 2 to 2 1/4".*

Answer: Miniature violets, being miniature, don't produce a very large root system. For this reason, we suggest never using a pot larger than 2 1/4". Placing a plant with a small root system in a larger pot would just mean an excess of soil-soil in which the plant would be able to produce a full root system. Without roots, this excess soil will remain wet (having no roots to absorb the water) which increases the chances of overwatering, root-rot, and all of its symptoms. Removing the pots and planting directly into a terrarium is much the same as potting into a very large pot. For this reason, if your watering isn't very careful and precise, it may be better to simply place the potted plants into the terrarium and then water them as you would any potted violet.

Does this mean you *can't* remove the pots and plant your violets directly into the terrarium's soil? Absolutely not! It only means being aware of the potential challenges. It may simply mean being more careful in your watering. Since terrariums generally don't come with drainage holes, you'll need to provide it within the terrarium itself. Adding a layer of nonabsorbent material in the bottom of the terrarium, like perlite, charcoal, or fine gravel, will provide a place to collect excess water. Use a very light soil mix. If you have a landscape in your terrarium, consider placing moisture tolerant plants where it is likely to stay wetter (usually at lower levels), and those needing less water elsewhere, or in smaller pockets of soil between (or in) rocks or wood. When placing your plants in a terrarium, consider the "microclimates" within it. Where would your violets be happiest? If your terrarium is sealed, this becomes even more important, since whatever moisture is inside it will stay there - create the proper environment in the beginning. Whatever you do, remember that African violets will continue to grow and bloom in your terrarium, however they are planted or potted. They'll need occasional grooming, and spent blooms will eventually decay and need to be removed.

*Question: I have a question. I have probably twenty beautiful violets from you folks. We changed our windows in our house to 'Solarcool bronze' and now my flowers are not nearly as pretty as they once were. Would an artificial light work if they were not getting enough?*

Answer: If it's a matter of not looking "pretty," it may be a matter of the color spectrum of the light, not necessarily the amount of it. Every window is different. It's possible that the glass in these windows is simply filtering out a different 'spectrum' of light than your previous windows, making them appear different. The same can be said of light bulbs - blooms will look different under different light. If it's not the color of the bloom, but the quantity, or how well the plant grows, then it may be a question of light intensity. The new windows may be filtering out more of it. Also keep in mind the season, weather, etc., don't blame your windows for shorter days or cloudy weather. In any event, artificial light is always best, since you, not 'mother nature,' has control over it. Grown under artificial lights, violets can be kept in nearly constant bloom. Better yet, if you don't like the color, you can change the bulb!

*Question: The plants arrived just fine, however, I am a bit disappointed in their color. I picked these out for my Mom looking for very lovely red violets. They are both more burgundy than a red.*

Answer: We understand your complaint. You are not the first. Unfortunately, this is as "red" as violets come. Though some do look pretty "red," you are right in saying that burgundy might sometimes be a better description. Those in the hobby generally have an understanding that "red" (or "blue," or "yellow," etc.) is not a true definition of the color, but an approximation, and use the term for convenience. Genetically, African violets simply don't produce the necessary pigments that would make true, "Fire Engine" red possible. Also, the appearance will depend greatly upon the lighting (see the question above), as well as the conditions in which the plant was grown - usually cooler temperatures, and otherwise good culture, will bring out more intense, deeper, colors. The good news is that most of the colors we see today existed on the violets that we knew even a few generations ago. As much as you, we're looking forward to seeing our first "true" red. Or blue. Or orange (can we dream?)!



Photo Credit: Jacquie Eisenhut

## ***Thunder Surprise***

*Exhibited by: Leonard Re  
Hybridized by: S. Sanders  
Semiminiature*



*Photo Credit: Jacquie Eisenhut*

## ***Rob's Bo Peep***

*Exhibited by: Leonard Re*

*Hybridized by: R. Robinson*

*Semiminiature*

# Summertime Violet Growing

(Or, how to keep your violets from becoming a trendy hors d'oeuvre)

By Jay Sespico • Jaysesp@gmail.com

I think that I loved summer even before I loved African violets. But, I loved both things as early as preadolescence. When I was a young boy growing up in the "South Towns," the suburbs of Buffalo, New York, I could hardly wait for summertime to come.

The longer days and the bright sunshine meant a welcome relief from the long gray winters, and a chance to be outside and finally be warm. With great excitement, I eagerly anticipated those care-free ten weeks between June and September when there was no school and the promise of vacation travel to anyplace different lingered in the air.

There is nothing quite like the summertime of school days, when you feel no call to work or the pressure to provide. On the other hand, there is nothing like having a job, the paycheck, and with that pay check come dollars of discretionary income with which you can purchase some African violets. A few purchases here, and a few purchases there, and all of a sudden your collection has become very large.

In the meantime, I found my way to the Sunshine State and learned how to grow violets all over again in the subtropics. I discovered that Florida is a wonderful place to grow violets, especially in the winter and spring, and especially if you don't leave plants in the car.

One of my first discoveries was that one couldn't leave one's violets unattended in one's vehicle because in a closed, unattended vehicle in Florida it gets hot enough to roast a chicken. After I finally got the steamed green bean smell out of the car, I began to discover some ways to keep my violets growing happily during the tropical heat of summer.

There is no need to dread the hot season of the Florida summer if you take care to tend your plants well and recognize the signposts of heat stress. Heat stress in African violets manifests itself in many different ways and is the foremost problem to look out for in summertime.

When violets first begin to exhibit heat stress, they tend to show a general malaise in plant vigor. Often, the color of the leaves begins to yellow slightly throughout the entire surface, and the center crown tends to lift up towards the light, even when there should be enough light provided. In its more advanced stages, the foliage becomes more predominantly yellow and the plant begins to lose vigor and symmetry as the leaves spoon inversely, giving the plant a very unkempt and unruly appearance. Heat stress in its most advanced stages makes the foliage as brown as the aforementioned roast chicken. A wise grower wouldn't want to get to this last stage, because from here, there is no recovery.

I can hear the questions forming in your mind just now: How would I know so intimately well all of the stages of heat stress? Because I only grow violets in every conceivable space there is in my home, including my garage where the daytime temperatures get to 120 degrees during the summer. I have burned up more violets than I can count - that's how! I confess that I have burned up so many violets that I have wracked my brain trying to come up with creative ways to use them. Knowing their edible nature, I have seriously considered serving them as hors d'oeuvres with some diced tomatoes and a little Pancetta. But, all the culinary creativity in the world wouldn't be as rewarding or as beautiful as a healthy, thriving African violet in bloom.

Surprisingly, violets will grow in the extreme heat if they are well cared for and those twin angles of cultural perfection, humidity and air movement, are present. The longer that I grow violets, the better I understand how important air movement and humidity are to good plant care. The two factors work in conjunction with each other and balance each other out. If you have good air movement in your home and the humidity is low, the plants will dry out as if they were facing a brisk Santa Ana wind. If humidity is present and there is



no airflow, your plants will be subject to fungus rot and powdery mildew.

Another important factor to consider is how to keep your plants well watered. In Florida, this means wick-watering. There has been a lot of discussion about whether to wick water your plants or not, but in the subtropics, I find it the only way to keep a large collection going. Our violets transpire copious amounts of water through their leaves at this time of year, much more than they did even a few weeks earlier. One of the reasons for this is that the temperatures are generally up, and you are most likely growing your violets in the precious purchased rarified ethers of the central air conditioning unit.

Central air makes living through the Florida summers much more bearable. However, air conditioners are notorious for sucking untold gallons of water out of the air. The plants are transpiring profuse amounts of water through their leaves to compensate for the dryer conditions and it hardly seems that we get the reservoirs full when they become dry, almost as we watch. I have taken to using very large reservoirs. I use the large sized ground coffee containers, as large as 48 ounces, because a large trailing African violet in an eight-inch pot will drain the water out of one of these in as little as two weeks. It is more important now, than it ever will be, to keep your plants well watered, because a plant with a dry wick can dehydrate to the point of wilting in as little as one day.

I really try to keep ahead of the watering at this time of year, and one of the best ways of doing that is by making an appointment with my plants. I try to shoehorn twenty minutes of time devoted strictly to watering, two or three times a week. When I water, I do simply that, just water! I don't groom or admire or fuss with the plants in any other way. That can be done in snippets of time whenever you walk by the light stands.

Also, when I water a violet, I water the entire shelf of violets and fill all the reservoirs at the same time, not just the one plant whose reservoir has gone dry. In this way I avoid the problem of forgetting that one plant at the back of the shelf that has gone dry and inevitably died while I wasn't looking. If you want to keep your collection in

good shape and you make watering a discipline, your plants will reward you with beautiful, healthy, symmetrical growth and even a good show of blooms.

There are some things that will happen to your summer collection of violets that you should not worry about, that naturally occur due to higher temperatures, longer hours of daylight, and ramped up plant metabolism. These symptoms really are not a cause of stress to the plant and will completely disappear after the hottest part of the summer has passed.

The first and foremost is the general reduction in leaf variegation. Rob Robinson of The Violet Barn has written in his many columns that temperature is the primary factor in plant variegation, and I agree with him. I have noticed a remarkable difference in the foliage of my plants year after year as the outdoor temperatures in our climate climb into the nineties. Even though I'm keeping my violets as cool as I can in the air-conditioning, really dramatic variegation, especially in the standard plants, seems to be a thing of the past. The variegation doesn't disappear entirely, and with the cooler temperatures of the fall, it returns once more in all its many hues.

The second change that you might notice at this time of year occurs in plants that have blooms with white or green edges, especially with the older varieties. Those plants that have exhibited beautiful Geneva edges during the winter months tend to exhibit a less pronounced edge in the summertime and, if they contain green in the edge, the edge may disappear altogether.

The third factor is the lessening of fantasy spots in the blossoms. This is because flower pigment is expressed more fully in blossoms that take a longer time to mature. In other words, blossoms that take more time to open have more color because the plant has more time to manufacture pigment to put into them.

With higher temperatures, the blossoms that took nine or ten weeks to open during the cooler months can open in as little as four to six weeks during the summertime, and generally have less color. But, this is no cause for alarm, the fantasy and the edges, like variegation, will return to their



former glory with more moderate temperatures.

There are a couple of myths about getting through the summer that sound like they would work well, but that I reject entirely. One of these is that you should reduce the amount of fertilizer you use at this time of year. I really find it an odd notion that, just at the time when the plants are working the hardest and producing the most growth, anyone would consider it a good idea to cut down on the amount of nutrients that are important for healthy growth. To me this is tantamount to training an Olympic athlete for the summer games and deciding arbitrarily to put him on a highly restricted diet. If you are using your fertilizer in small amounts (1/8 to 1/4 tsp. of granular fertilizer per gallon of water), by all means, keep that same formula going even during the summer. The plant needs those elements to build all the new growth that it will produce during this time.

The second myth is that disbudding is the best way to keep your plants from transpiring too much water and thus keeping the watering schedule easier. This really isn't true at all. During the summer months, African violets drink tremendous amounts of water no matter what, and unless you are growing for show, they should not be entirely disbudded.

If a plant is entirely disbudded, its higher metabolism rate makes it want to produce bloom so earnestly that it often times begins to sucker very badly from the leaf axils. Sometimes the suckering is so bad that the plant is entirely ruined and nothing can be done except to start over again. I find that it is best to let the plant have only two or three bloom stalks at a time. This way the plant can throw some of its overactive energies into producing some blooms, but not so much as to ruin the symmetry.

I hope you will find some of the things I have discussed interesting and helpful. Just because it is getting hotter doesn't mean that you have to stop enjoying your plants or, even worse, serve them as hors d'oeuvres. Well-cared for African violets will bloom and grow well even during the hot months of June, July, August, and September. There is no other plant I know of that is as abundantly floriferous as an African violet, and the times when I have been diligent about caring for my violets, they have rewarded me with good growth and plenty of bloom. After all, isn't that why we grow them?

From the Dixie News,  
Publication of the Dixie AVS



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

## ***Dress Rehearsal***

*Exhibited by: Libby Behnke*

*Hybridized by:*

*D. DiCamillo/Lyndon*

*Lyon Greenhouses*

*Standard*

# Temperature Tip

All African violet colors are more intense when the plants are grown cooler. "Cellar dwellers" have the most gorgeous colors both in their foliage and blossoms. If you grow plants upstairs, move the variegated plants downstairs during the summer months so their foliage doesn't turn all green.

Violet rooms can frequently get above 80 degrees in July and August. You can do the same with some of the unstable bi-colors which tend to turn a solid color in the heat. However, there is such a thing as too cool, and some of the basement

plants that are furthest from the water heater and furnace during the winter months tend to get very dark green, bunched up, hairy foliage.

This is NOT mites; this is a 'cold reaction.' Keep those plants on the drier side, and they will do fine during the winter, though they don't look their best until the basement warms up again in the spring.

From *The Empire Violet Magazine*,  
Publication of the NY State AVS, Inc.



## Boyce Edens Research Fund

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Donations received from February 1, 2013 - March 31, 2013 • Total = \$432.00



### Multicolor

Albuquerque African Violet Club,  
Albuquerque, NM  
AVS of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA  
*In memory of Graydon Cass,  
husband of Margaret Cass*  
African Violet Society of San Francisco,  
San Francisco, CA



### Two-tone

First Lakeland African Violet Society,  
Lakeland, FL



### Thumbprint

Mrs. Grace W Bailey, Virginia Beach, VA  
Evelyn J. Boyer, Austin, TX  
Lynn D. Campo, Hamden, CT  
Mary Corondan, McKinney, TX

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Jo's Violets, Victoria, TX  
Elena Martinez, Miami, FL  
F. Eleanor Mattaliano, Easley, SC  
Metropolitan St Louis African Violet Council,  
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Margaret Nasta, McKeesport, PA  
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Doris Schenck, Iola, WI  
Sweet Water African Violet Society, Bay Shore, NY  
Dorothy Vogt, Lindenhurst, NY  
Lynn Wallach, Hollywood, FL



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

## *Strep. Heartland's Midnight Sun*

*Exhibited by: Judy Smith*

*Hybridized by: D. Martens*

# Gesneriads: What is Ornamental?

By Dale Martens

I just taught a gesneriad judging school in Chicago, and we spent some time discussing what constitutes ornamental values/factors for a gesneriad not in bloom. What got me focused on this issue was that I attended an AVSA sanctioned African violet show, and someone got a blue ribbon for *petrocosmea menglienensis* not in bloom. This is not the first time I've seen a gesneriad get a blue ribbon when it had minimum decorative appeal and looked more like a plant out of bloom.

Therefore, I'm writing this to advise exhibitors, and remind judges, what is meant by "ornamental values/factors." Re-read the AVSA judging manual's section on judging entries in the ornamental classes.

The Gesneriad Society's Flower Show Manual says, "ornamental value replaces bloom in the scale of points. It's a measure of whether or not a plant displays qualities other than flowers that would justify its entry in a foliage class, rather than a place to put a gesneriad out of bloom at show time. A non-blooming gesneriad must have additional qualities to compensate for its lack of flowers. Ornamental factors to consider include: shape in which the whole plant has been trained whether by emphasizing and enhancing its natural growth habit or by developing an artistic pattern through careful control. Leaf or stem textures ranging from brilliantly glossy or waxy, white woolly, puckered or roughened like corduroy, sandpaper or resembling burnished metal; effective leaf arrangement such as the braided effect of unequal leaf pairs apparent in some columneas or the complex and unusually flat rosettes like those seen in some petrocosmeas;

Unusual colors of foliage like the black-red of some *Nematanthus* or velvet-red of *Smithiantha cinnabarina*; color contrast like the red reverse of leaves, silver spots, contrasting veins, brightly colored hairs, red-tipped leaves, green and white variegation, or the extreme color contrast of pink, white, and green of some episcias; colorful calyces, display fruits, and berries can enhance ornamental value."

Some of us have seen Olive Ma Robinson's past entries of *Columnea orientandina* with those large, glossy, pink berries! That's ornamental!

Now think again about the *Petrocosmea* that got a blue ribbon. What qualities listed above apply to this entry? I saw a few bumps and "fuzz" on the leaves. Even if the shape had been worked on, this species and others like *p. flaccida*, *p. parryorum* and *p. forrestii* (and often its hybrids), usually are best exhibited in bloom because they have minimal decorative appeal. Think about it, even a non-blooming African violet (green or variegated) is not allowed entry in the AVSA horticulture division when not in bloom. Some of them when not in bloom, especially those with crown variegation, would have more ornamental value/factors than some petrocosmeas! I don't want you to think I'm just picking on petrocosmeas as there are other gesneriads including a few primulinas, *Nematanthus*, sinningias, *Streptocarpus*, and others that without blooms are best kept at home due to lack of ornamental qualities.

From *The Empire Violet Magazine*,  
publication of the New York State AVS, Inc.



## Timely Summer Tips By Sharon Rosenzweig

Summer temperatures mean stress to African violets. There are several things you can do to "summerize" your plants:

- Reduce the number of hours under lights.
- Run the lights at night when temperatures are cooler.
- For window growing, draw the curtains or blinds to prevent sunburn.
- Plants need more water but less fertilizer. Use 1/8 tsp to a gallon of water.
- Place a fan near your growing area to circulate the air (but not blowing on plants).
- If humidity is low, mist the plants in the morning with very warm water.
- Keep plants out of direct sun until leaves are dry.
- Variegated plants may turn all green in warm weather. Move variegated plants to the lowest shelf and use a fertilizer with low nitrogen until cool weather returns.
- If the white variegation has turned pink, this is also due to higher temperatures. Move plants to the lowest shelf.
- Summer is not the time to order leaves or propagate. The temperatures are too hot, and the risk of the leaves rotting is quite high. Wait until the early fall to increase your collection.
- Give plants their own space. They should not touch each other, as crowding is conducive to mechanical damage and fungal infections.
- If you see tiny bugs flying around your African violets, especially when you move the plants, they are most probably fungus gnats. They will not harm the plants. The best way to control them is to let the plants dry out a bit or hang an insect sticky strip near your plants. They are odorless and non-toxic.
- During the summer, to prevent outside insects from invading your plants, especially thrips, you should not open any windows near your plants.

*From Ye Bay Stater,*  
Publication of the Bay State AVS

## Design, Try It! By Sharon Rosenzweig

Many African violet exhibitors are reluctant to try a design. All it takes is imagination and patience. Here are some Do's and Don'ts that will help you create a design of distinction.

- Always use a base (unless prohibited by the schedule).
- Furnish your own backdrop.
- Try not to use common materials – ferns, Scotch broom.
- Don't overuse man-made materials.
- Don't overuse painted material.
- Always have your plant material coming or appear to come from one central point.
- Don't use an accessory unless it is an integral and complementary part of the arrangement.
- Condition your plant materials to last not only for the judging but the duration of the show.
- Make your design sturdy.
- Try to use at least two types of plant material in addition to your African violet to give dimension.
- Don't use other flowers with African violets in your design, or you will risk losing the African violet focal point.
- Use contrasting or complementary colors, but not both in the same design.
- Completely conceal your mechanics.
- Experiment. Be bold, be different, and say something with your design.
- If possible, make up your design ahead of time and put it in a place where it is constantly in your view. This helps you to fine tune it.
- Never mist your design once it is placed for judging. This will spot the leaves.
- If you have any doubts as to what the judges will interpret, use a 3x5 index card to explain your design.
- Be helpful to your fellow designers. Offer assistance and try to instill an atmosphere of teamwork rather than one of rivalry.

# Pop Pop...Fizz Fizz...Oh!

By Kathy Brewster

From her new CD, "Eleven Diamonds"

That's the sound of CO2 infused water while I'm watering my African violets. The results? Plants growing twice as big! Could that really be true? I'm finding out each day that tepid CO2 infused water promises rewarding results. Experimenting with my violets has always been an exciting time in my plant room. I eradicated thrips and other bugs years ago using bleach. What was next? In our 2011 Texas State African Violet Convention, I accepted the challenge to use bleach on my violets. What fantastic results followed as documented in the previous article, "Thrips Last Stand."

I'm not afraid to try new and unheard of ideas. Here are a few things I've included in my experiments: peanut butter, mustard, milk, and dry ice. Pretty ridiculous, and even if milk does the body the good, it sure makes a plant stinky in a few days. I even tried some dry ice in the 105 quart clear plastic crates that house my violets. Even though the CO2 emitted from dry ice is what plants thrive on, it froze my violet. I abandoned the very thought of any further experimentation until I saw the advertisement about a soda streamer.

I got my son a soda maker for his birthday last year and was intrigued as I saw the quick, simple three steps to produce soda water. I've learned that it is faster and easier for a plant to access

nutrients from water than for them to extract these nutrients from the soil.

So, I thought, "What effect would misting the leaves have, since photosynthesis takes place in the leaves?" Knowing that the roots need oxygen, my crates are the perfect place to release the CO2. I pour the CO2 infused water on the matte and the gases rise to and through the leaves. By the time the roots get their drink, the water has become flat. So those roots get the oxygen that they need and the plant is nourished.

After I invested in my own soda streamer, I began my experimental journey. I wondered if anybody else had discovered this brilliant idea. So I began researching and found out that many growers have been effectively using this method for over two years. The results were all good, and their experiments showed a growth of double with CO2 infused water applications.

To date, I've used gallons of CO2 infused water and all of my violets seem to enjoy their fizzy drink. I used several methods of watering, including wick and matte watering. I even mist them from time to time with the CO2 infused water. The controlled humidity in the plastic crates creates a perfect atmosphere. As I listen to the "pop-pop...fizz-fizz" of the bubbly CO2 water while watering my plants, my response continues to be, "Oh!"

*AVSA Office Hours  
Monday - Thursday  
9:00 am - 4:00 pm*



# Aren't Violets Fun?

By Ruth Goeke

Aren't violets fun? I've been growing violets high unto forty years, give or take, and still get a thrill from these lovely little plants - whether it's a violet with a full head of bloom or a new arrival sending up one bloom stalk for the first time.

This is not an article on culture because I'm certainly no expert, and any advice from me should be prefaced with "Don't grow your violets like I do mine!"

I do have the majority of my plants wicked, but keeping water in the trays - that's another story! You should not let your plants go from drought to flood - like I have a tendency to do much of the time, but keep the soil evenly moist. Violets like to have a nutritionally sound menu so they should either be on the constant feed method or at least fertilized regularly. Remember the old adage - *fertilize weekly weakly*? Many times my plants are too dry for me to use fertilized water when I do water, so I end up watering with plain water with (good) intentions to go back later and fill the trays with water that has fertilizer added, but somehow that doesn't always get done.

Our favorite plants do like to be repotted into fresh soil, at least occasionally, and as they grow, to be potted into a slightly larger pot, although they do not like to be over-potted. My plants tend to stay in the same soil and pots for a long, long time!

One of my favorite things to do with this hobby (other than acquiring new plants!) is putting down leaves. I *love* putting down leaves. I'm not quite at the point any longer of keeping *every leaf* when breaking back a plant, but I do have a tendency to put down too many leaves of one variety. Guess that goes back to the days of being a commercial grower wanting a number of plants of the same variety. Some habits are difficult to break!

It is so thrilling to see a rooted leaf sending up baby plants. Ideally, as soon as the babies are about two inches with several leaves, they can be potted up into their own individual pot. (Now, just because I enjoy putting down leaves, and know when I *should* be separating the baby plants from

the mother leaf, that doesn't mean I'm prompt and timely in doing so. Sometimes those plantlets are so tall, lanky, and entwined with their siblings, I end up discarding the bunch because they are growing every which way with no possible hope of symmetry. They are no longer baby plants, but teenagers! I do sometimes end up taking a leaf or two from the batch before discarding and starting the process over again.

Good air circulation is a must, and our violets are comfortable with the same temperatures as we are. I do have fans going in the plant room, almost year around, because here in my part of Texas we don't have a lot of cold temperatures (thank goodness!). In the winter, my plant room is usually quite comfortable without too much added heat, and in the summer the room tends to get rather warm (I should say downright hot!) from all the plant lights burning. Even with the air conditioner set on high (as evidenced by the exorbitant electricity bills), the room is not at optimum temperature during the summer. Instead of the 70-75°, sometimes temperatures in my plant room will reach 90°.

I don't replace light bulbs until they burn out, so some of my T-12's are quite old and I'm sure not giving off as much light as they should. I have some of the T-8's on a couple of plant stands, and I can't make up my mind how long I need to burn those lights. I either have bleached or speckled foliage, or no blooms and tight centers. Right now, I have them on for ten hours, and I think that is still too long. I think I could easily cut them back to eight hours. I do know these T-8 florescent bulbs don't need to be on as long as the T-12's. Another thing I have noticed is the T-8 bulbs don't last as long as the T-12s, and they're much more expensive. Maybe I'm getting the wrong brand! One problem...it gets more and more difficult to change those light bulbs when the bottom shelf goes out! Often they don't get replaced right away, and that chore is added to the ever-growing "to do" list for my son...

Everyone likes their own space and not being crowded, and the same applies to our violets. They need ample space to spread their leaves without getting into the next plant's space. Of course, the rule of thumb should be "*quality* over quantity," but somehow I just haven't learned how to apply that rule to my plant acquisitions. I tend to go with the quantity – *LOTS* of quantity!! So my shelves are ALWAYS over-crowded. (But, isn't it fun?)

Recently I took several trays of plants and spread the plants out where they had much more room, and they love all the new space they have. The plants have really "blossomed" (after they got over the initial shock of not being so crowded). They have rewarded me with better symmetry and heavier bloom, and it is amazing how fast they have grown! They have doubled in size and did so just because they had room to grow without interference from their neighboring plant!

Some people enjoy growing for show, and many show plants are simply amazing. I could never grow those large beautiful show plants full of bright blossoms. I do love going to the shows, seeing all the beautiful plants, and I really enjoy doing design, but I don't focus a lot of my time and energy actually "growing for show." I don't get into the scientific approach of growing for show. Usually, whatever happens to be fairly symmetrical and blooming at show time is what ends up "going to show!"

I have good intentions of growing my violets the correct way, but life has a way of interfering. So, my trays are not always filled with fertilized water when they should be, nor are they always as clean as they should be, and I probably have some plants that haven't been repotted in years (necks aren't so bad...), some are under-potted (who has room for big pots?), some are over-potted (trying to skip a step), some (most) are overcrowded – some babies on leaves are already blooming – but my schedule is usually quite hectic and there's little spare time – so unfortunately, my plants get very neglected. Is

there any plant as forgiving as our beloved violets? With a minimum of care, they will reward you with blooms or a single blossom stem standing tall above pretty green foliage or variegated foliage that is attractive even without blossoms. If a plant starts looking like it may have a problem, I do toss it rather than do a lot of spraying, etc. (That gives me an excuse to get a new plant!)

While I have a wide variety of violets, I grow a quite a few of miniatures and semi-miniatures from Hortense (she and Ray are such very dear friends), some of Rob's, and standards predominately from Lyons (check out their website and try to limit your purchases to just a few...it can't be done!), and of course, mixed in with all the rest, there's always a few Optimaras remaining from our sales. Recently, I've gotten interested in the Russian hybrids. The blossoms are very large and striking on these plants. And, scattered in amongst the violets, there are chiritas (my absolute favorite cousin), episcias (I love the blue and lavender flowered varieties), a few trays of sinningias (thank Dave Harris for that!) and streps (I haven't quite mastered the streps yet, but what beautiful blooms!). Then there's the occasional aeschynanthus and columnea. (These cousins are also fun to grow!) I have very good results growing the cousins in the Oyama pots (if I can remember to keep the reservoir filled.)

But the real added benefit of growing these beauties? The wonderful life-long friendships I have made over the years! Thanks to violets, I have close friends who have added so much joy to my life, people I would not have ever met had it not been for the common love of this little plant. This is the real value of growing these delightful little plants. So, the next time you are working with your plants, admiring them, or getting ready for show—just take a few minutes and think about all the friends you have made over the years because of the common interest in this favorite houseplant.

Aren't violets fun?



# Coming Events



## May 4 & 5 NEW YORK

African Violet and Gesneriad Society of WNY

Judged Show and Sale

Galleria Mall

Galleria Drive

Cheektowaga, New York

May 4, 2013 - Noon - 6:00 pm

May 5, 2013 - 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Info: Judith Niemira

judith.niemira@gmail.com

## May 4 & 5 - Wisconsin

Oshkosh Violet Society, 33rd

Judged Show & Sale

St. Jude the Apostle Church Hall  
(Corner of 5th ave. & Knapp St.)

Oshkosh, WI

May 4 - 10am-4:30pm

May 5 - 11:30am-3:00pm

Info: Kevin Degner (920)426-3764

Email:

kevin\_degner@sbcglobal.net

## May 4 & 5 - NEW JERSEY

Garden State AVC

62nd Annual Show/Sale

May 4 - Noon - 4pm

May 5 - 11:00 am - 3pm

Mercer County Community College

1200 Old Trenton Rd

West Windsor, NJ 08550

Info: Paula Bal

GSAVCmail@gmail.com

Facebook: Garden State

African Violet Club

Website:

<http://www.princetonol.com/group/s/gsave/>

## May 4 & 5 - ILLINOIS

Glenview/NorthShore AVS

10am to 4:30pm

Display, Sale &

Educational Exhibit

Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Illinois

Info: rggoodsell@gmail.com

## May 4 & 5 - OHIO

Cincinnati AVS Show/Sale

Eastgate Mall, Interstate 275

and State Route 32 (Ohio)

May 4 - Noon - 9pm

May 5 - Noon - 5pm

Free Admission

Info: Penny Wichman:

pennypwic@aol.com

Al Cenci: acenci@cinci.rr.com

## May 10 & 11 - MARYLAND

Baltimore AV & Gesneriad Club

60th Annual Show & Sale

The Shops at Kenilworth

800 Kenilworth Drive

Towson, MD

May 10 9am-7pm

May 11 9am-5pm

Free Admission

Info: Shirley Huffman

(301) 854-2021

Email: bshuffman2@aol.com

## May 10 & 11 - OHIO

Parmatown AVC

Judged Show and Sale

Parmatown Mall

7899 W. Ridgewood Dr

Parma, OH

May 10 - 12:30pm - 9pm

May 11 - 9am - 5pm

Info: Lori Hilfer (440) 582-4310

Email: rahilfer@roadrunner.com

## May 11 - Wisconsin

Sundowners AVC &

Crosstown AVC

Annual Spring Sale

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Messiah Lutheran Church

4861 Liverpool Street

Yorba Linda, CA 92886

May 11, 2013

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Info: Diane Miller (714) 281-4339

violetmiss@aol.com

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<http://www.violetpatchofsouthflorida.com/>

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# Thailand and African Violets

By Melvin J. Robey  
emelrobey@gmail.com  
Bangsaray, Thailand

Living in Thailand is like living on the far edge of the African violet world. Actually, closer to Africa, where the African violets were discovered, than to America.

Orchids are King, and African violets are non-existent here. I have been either visiting or living full-time in Thailand since 2002. Every African Violet Society Convention during this period has found me here. The AVSA staff told me there are four other AVSA members here. Hopefully, one of them will email me after they read this article. Also hope they speak a little English, since my Thai is somewhat limited. Fortunately, my wife can translate Thai for me and has grown a few African violets in our home in California.

I look forward to receiving the *African Violet Magazine* and read it on the same day it arrives. I have found over the years since joining the Society that the articles have vastly improved in quality. It is also great to read those technical articles, providing excellent, in-depth information on our African violets.

I have only found a few (less than six) unnamed African violets for sale in one of the local markets. These were from seed that a lady from

Holland had brought with her. Of course, I bought them, babied them into flowering, and then gave them to a friend when I had to return to the States. Unfortunately, they were not around when I returned six months later.

At the King of Thailand's eightieth birthday, a special horticulture show was dedicated to honor him. I would estimate it covered about 200+ acres. It was the single most impressive flower exhibition I have seen anywhere in the world. After hours of enjoying fabulous flower displays, I finally stumbled onto some African violets in a greenhouse. It was immediately obvious that whoever was taking care of them did not understand what would happen by using overhead sprinklers. Poor little African violets were in the early stages of a serious crown rot problem. I doubt they lasted another week.

African violets could easily be grown out of doors in the southern half of Thailand where we live. Kept in the shade, the temperature (day and night) is perfect, as is the humidity. Even the Spanish moss hanging from the trees does well.

I miss going to local stores in the States and picking up a half dozen ("noids") to cheer the house up. For now it has to be orchids.

## Coming Events Deadlines

January Issue - November 1

July Issue - May 1

March Issue - January 1

September Issue - July 1

May Issue - March 1

November Issue - September 1

# Doing Things Differently Can Rejuvenate Your Club

*Strategies Aimed at Improving Your Club Experience*

By Sayeh Beheshti

One of the biggest challenges faced by new or established AVSA affiliate clubs is attracting new members and keeping existing members excited and motivated. As a person who has successfully started and headed African violet clubs in two states, **Carolee Carter** is uniquely qualified to speak on this topic.

Her presentation at the 2011 AVSA Convention titled "Building and Maintaining Affiliate Club Membership" offered proven strategies and activities for all members regardless of their growing experience with the goal of building club camaraderie. Carolee's main steps in ensuring your club's success can be summed up as:

## **1. Marketing your club**

Part of a club's success is how we market and make our club enticing to both the community and members. To begin, you will need to ask some fundamental questions about your club: Who do you want to attract? When is their availability to meet? Where is a convenient location? Working professionals will have different availability than retired seniors. This will determine when to schedule and where to meet. To jumpstart your plan, you can get a list of AVSA members for your area or call the closest AVSA Affiliate club to learn what works or not.

Once you have decided the basics, you will need to reach out to the community: prepare a press list of daily, weekly, or monthly publications. You can often pick up copy of local newspapers from stores, community centers, and even local nurseries as you drive around. Your press list should contain the names of the publications, ideally a contact name or email as well as their publication deadlines. Often times, all the community newspapers in an area are published by the same company. This will allow your event to be listed in their community calendars. You can also invite a reporter to attend your meetings or special events. Blanket the

press with this information prior to your first meeting.

Another way of advertising your club is to provide business-type cards to local nurseries to give to people who purchase African violets. You can reach out to the community and offer to speak at local garden clubs. Contact your local botanical garden and get involved with a local 4H or girl guides or elementary classes. Another approach could be to offer a plant clinic where people bring in their violets to get expert advice on what's wrong and how to solve it. All of these can be great ways to inform people about your club. When people come to your meetings or join your club, your strategy should shift to marketing to members.

Make a sign-in sheet for interested people and new members and give a door prize at the end of the year to the member with best attendance. Provide information for new members such as a welcome letter, a membership card, and even a copy of your By-laws.

One very effective way of marketing your club is to have a website. If you don't have a website already, why not?

A typical site should contain such things as: message from president, minutes from meetings, your club's By-laws, a list of your board and committee chairs, programs for your year, a spotlight on a member each month, current news in the AV world, meeting handouts, links to regional and national affiliates, FAQ's, and a photo gallery.

Confidential information like a current membership list can be placed in a members-only section.

## **2. Organization**

At one point or another, we have all suffered from a poorly organized meeting that drags on and on, leaving us with a sense of wasted time. In this world of so much overload and brain clutter, people lead very busy and hectic lives. Coming to an African violet club is their way of going back to the



nature so often missing from our routines. To make sure that everyone has a great experience, the club needs to be organized both in structure as well as activities:

### ***Organizing your club structure:***

A good club is based on a solid foundation of executive officers and directors with By-laws to guide them all. If you are starting a new club, it is a great idea to write standing rules, elect officers, develop a year of programs, and encourage members to subscribe to the *African Violet Magazine* published by AVSA.

Other activities that will keep your club's structure solid are: keeping a record of expenses, agenda, and script, and making plans to have refreshments, plants and supplies for sale at meetings. To keep members updated on club activities every month, remember to email minutes and meeting notices to members and mail a hard copy to people without email.

You should have a designated club photographer for meetings who can not only take pictures of club events, but also to spotlight members. Photos can then be used in the club's scrapbook, on your website, as well as to provide pictures to the press.

### ***Organizing your club activities:***

Organization starts at the top, and your president must be organized and prepare everything prior to the meeting. Keep the business portion short and to the point and not more than 20 minutes. Major business should be handled by the Executive Board or a special committee who would report their findings at the club's next meeting.

Keep your presentations on time and educational; they should be fun and factual as opposed to serious and dry.

If you are not sure how to structure a meeting, order a copy of AVSA Guide for Affiliate Presidents & AVSA Representatives. Write a script that includes a show-and-tell as part of your agenda. If you have a special program, give handouts for illustration and post them on your website.

To keep your meetings interesting, try to have a variety of activities besides speakers and lectures.

Some suggestions for these are:

Hands-on workshops.

Dawg shows - where the ugliest plant wins a prize and bragging rights. Some clubs offer a mock trophy.

Project plants where all members get a starter plant of the same variety to grow.

Encourage questions - engage the members in a dialogue.

Invite guest speakers from nearby affiliates.

Shared projects for members - use different soils or growing conditions and measure the difference.

Find a commercial greenhouse that is willing to sponsor your club and grow plants for you to sell if you provide them with leaves.

If you have a show, develop an exciting theme. Feature presentations on Grow to Show and Dare to Design to guide members through the show process. Don't pressure them. Some people like to grow just for their own pleasure. Lure them in slowly!

Another great way to have new members knocking on your door is to invite your state affiliate to have a show in your city. This can be a life saver and gives a lot of visibility to the hosting club. Most of the work for these shows does not have to be done by your club, but the state affiliate will step in and bring in their expertise.

### **3. Developing a sense of Camaraderie**

Creating a warm and inviting environment of friendship is not that easy. Oftentimes, you may have cliques that create tension and politics which always drives people away. Remember, everyone is cutting back from other things to make time for the club, so sources of tension or nasty situations will discourage them from returning. Everyone should be treated with respect regardless of their seniority in the club or growing experience, and more experienced members may learn from a newbie's perspective.

Some things you can do to build a sense of camaraderie are:

Celebrate birthdays every month with celebrants getting a first pick from the raffle table.

Always have raffle table. It's good for your treasury and a wonderful way to get members growing different varieties.



Rotate a volunteer list for food.

Choose a member a month to spotlight, and you will be amazed at the response as members learn about each other's hidden talents. Give new members a blooming plant.

One of the participants at the presentation asked about strategies to deal with a person who won't stop talking. Carolee mentioned that every club at one point or another has someone who seems to dominate the conversation with interruptions. It is the role of leadership to diffuse the situation, and that can be something as simple as saying: "You have good points, but we will deal with them at a later time. Let's hear what some of our other members have to say about this."

Another question concerned the reason large clubs fall apart. Carolee summed this up by saying it's because of the loss of a sense of camaraderie. Clubs are being taken over by assertive people with big egos or those who refuse to share their knowledge because they want to continue to be the best grower in the club. Clubs are communities, and it helps to remember that it takes respect amongst members to create that community.

#### Last thoughts ....

Carolee concluded her presentation with some last words of advice:

Don't guard your treasury too much. One of the

things that kills a club is the constant statement of: "We don't have the money...." Spend it on your members in various fun and informative ways.

One of the best things you can do is to regularly ask yourself questions: Are you losing members? If so, start asking some hard questions about why, how many? Have you forgotten to remind them of meetings? Are the meeting times convenient, do you have promotional material? Are you fostering positive energy in your meetings? Is everyone having fun? If not, they're not coming back.

Constant emphasis on show planning can suck out the life out of a club, so don't force people to enter the show. If it's too much of a burden, consider having a show every second year or perhaps a plant display, workshop, and sale. And don't wear out your core group of people. Encourage a rotation of "things to do."

The best thing I can take away from Carolee's presentation is that you should never say, "We've always done it this way," and keep an open mind to new ways of doing things and progressing with time.

*Note:* Carolee's original presentation entitled, "Building Affiliate Membership," is available in PowerPoint format for purchase at \$5.00 from the AVSA store at [www.avsa.org](http://www.avsa.org).

From *Chatter*, publication of the  
AVS of Canada



## AVSA's Facebook Page

AVSA has it's very own **Facebook** page, with over 500 friends! Please take a moment to stop by and "like" our page! Be sure to post your club's shows, meetings, awards, or other club and African violet information. Thank you, Ann-Marie Keene, for helping to keep our Facebook page up-to-date!

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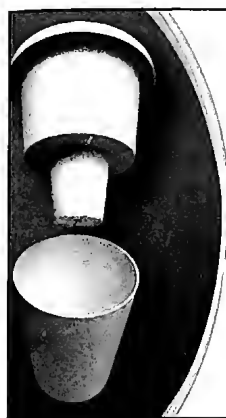
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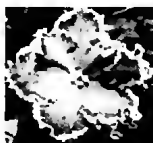
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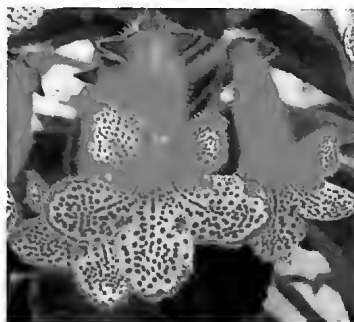
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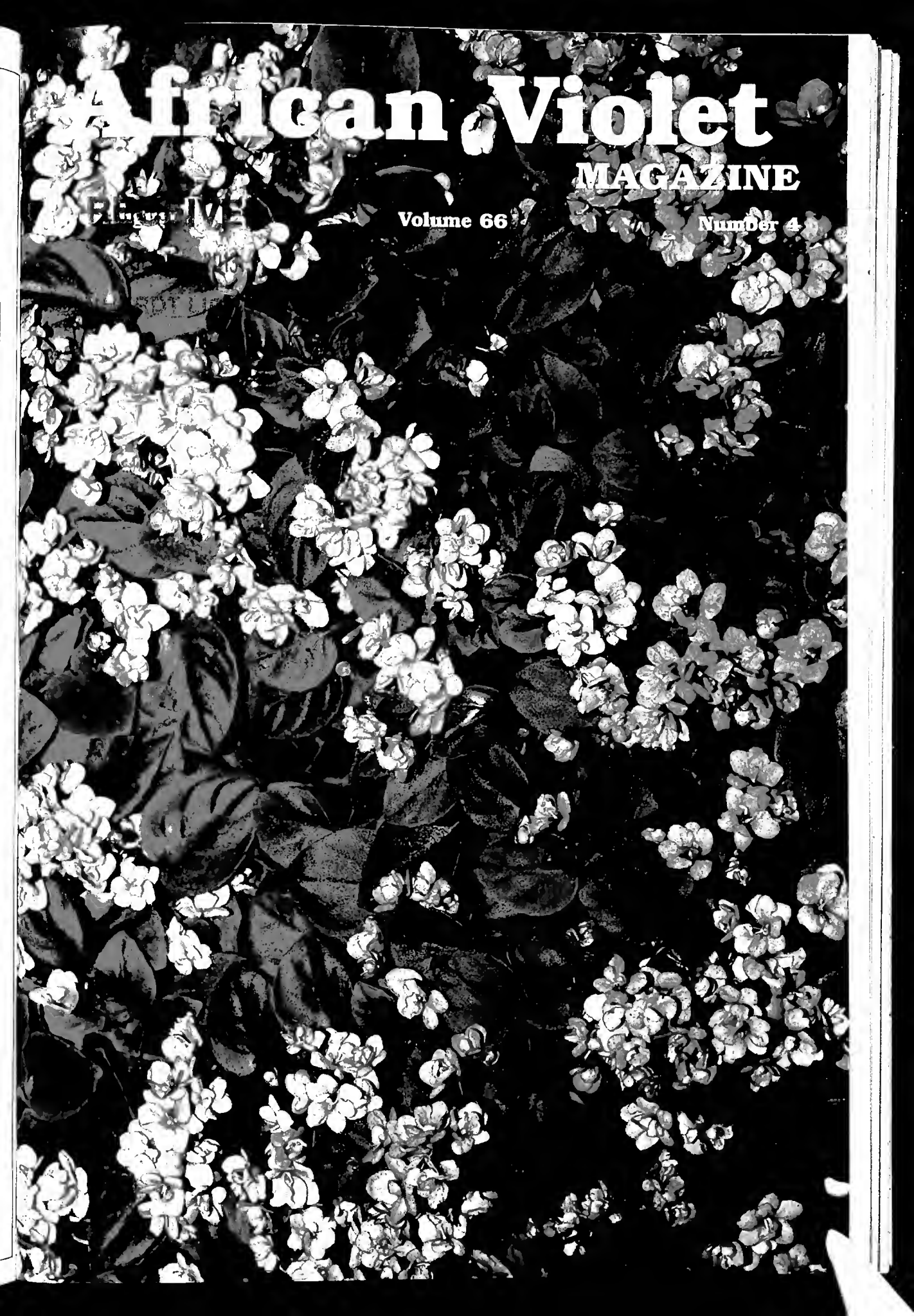


# African Violet

MAGAZINE

Volume 66

Number 4



## AVSA Information

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**ARTICLES BY MEMBERS, COLUMNISTS AND MEMORIALS:** Send to Editor.

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**COMING EVENTS:** Send to Editor.

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# African Violet

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### On this cover: Rob's Galiwinku

Best in Show

Best Trailer

**Won by: Ben Haning**

Semiminiature Trailer

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.



# President's Message

*By John T. Carter, President*

1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

I have just returned home from the 67th annual AVSA convention in Austin, TX. We hear that everything is bigger in Texas and our host, the First Austin African Violet Society, certainly proved the "bigger-in-Texas" fact. We had about 330 members registered for the convention, which is the largest number for several years. There were 107 exhibitors entering over 1000 exhibits that made this the largest show in many years. It was a beautiful show room with all types of exhibits and over 100 designs. If you were not there, you missed a great convention. Many thanks go to our First Austin and Lone Star friends for their hard work on our behalf!

This year I noticed a larger than usual number of younger members. Statistically, we do not have any records as to the age of our membership, but the visibility of the younger members has been more noticeable in the past several years. This gives me encouragement as to the future of AVSA. In speaking with some of these members, it was obvious that they are as concerned about the future of AVSA as they are with growing and showing African violets. They were pleased to learn that our membership levels are remaining fairly level now. They challenged me to set a goal and put together a plan to once again increase membership. This is a very reasonable request and is one we should address every year. The focus of the Executive Committee has been to get the bills paid and someone to host our conventions.

I have set a goal of a 10% increase in our membership during the next two years. I challenged those at the installation banquet, and also will challenge you, to give a gift membership to some-



one that they/you know showing an interest in African violets. We are also extending the special offer to purchase a convention DVD at a discounted price for members renewing on time. We will be offering the new DVD about our vendors at a reduced price to new members joining on the website. Additional efforts to attract and retain our membership will be announced later. You may also

send your suggestions to me at the contact information noted above.

I am pleased to announce that Barbara Burde has accepted the challenge of leading a new Internet Committee and getting the website brought up to your expectations. I am NOT going to tell you that changes will be made by the time you read this. However, the committee has met and is developing a plan to implement changes. We have limited technical people to make changes so they will not happen overnight. But we want you to know that we hear your concerns and will be working toward advancing our web presence. And we also express our thanks to Winston Goretsky and his Internet Committee for their efforts on behalf of AVSA during these last several years.

Don't forget to visit our commercial vendors when you travel this year. There were over a dozen vendors present in Austin, and we appreciate their efforts to grow and bring so many beautiful plants to our members and visitors. We hope all of you have lots of potential show winners to repot and grow and tend this summer in preparation for next winter's shows.

John





# Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702  
Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

As I expected, the AVSA 2013 Convention in Austin, TX, was a fantastic event! Well over 300 of our members joined us, and there were more than 1,000 exhibits in the Show! Our AVM photography crew spent a very long day photographing the entries for inclusion in this magazine. There were so many gorgeous plants that we just kept going back for more!

The plant, 'Rob's Galiwinku,' gracing the cover of this issue of the *African Violet Magazine*, gives you some idea about the talents and dedication of the grower, **Ben Haning**. Not only did Ben take the Best in Show award with this plant, but he won Horticultural Sweepstakes, with 69 blue ribbons! (See photo on page 36).

The local Austin club members did a wonderful job of sharing that warm, Texas welcome! The tours were a hit, and those going over to San Antonio and the Alamo came back with lots of souvenirs.

We've all been invited to join our friends, the Holtkamps, in Nashville next year for the 2014 AVSA Convention. **Russell Kirchner**, a representative of Holtkamps, along with his lovely girlfriend, **Jami Anderson**, came to the Austin convention to personally deliver the invitation. Russell and Jami were a big hit with our members, and there was a lot of excitement about visiting the Holtkamp Greenhouses. So mark your calendars! The 2014 Nashville Convention is May 25 – June 1.

You may notice that the usual "convention collage" is not in this issue. With the convention so late this year, it was difficult to get the "requirements" in and still have enough room for



other things on my schedule. They will appear in the next issue.

We have a new columnist, **Neil Lipson**, who has agreed to write a column called "Technically Speaking... or Not." I'm sure you're familiar with Neil's articles, which are very well researched. His first column is on page 12 in this issue.

I want to personally thank our AVSA Immediate Past President **Linda Hall**, for the fantastic job she did as the President of the African Violet Society of America. For me, Linda was one of the best Presidents I have worked for. I always appreciated her advice and suggestions, and her availability, as well as her poise in handling difficult situations.

Note: The article, *African Violet Culture Notes*, which appeared in the Nov/Dec 2012 AVM, page 38 & 39, was originally entitled "Suckers (Side Shoots) on African Violets," and was written by **Margaret Taylor**, and first appeared in "The African Violet" newsletter of the African Violet Association of Australia.

Ruth



# Office Update

By Jenny Daugereau, AVSA Office Manager

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: [avsa@earthlink.net](mailto:avsa@earthlink.net)

This will be my last column as your AVSA Office Manager. On August 31, 2013, I will be leaving AVSA, and Amy Carruth will take over this position. I know our members will welcome her and do all they can to help her make this transition an easy one. I have complete confidence that Amy will do a great job for our society.

I began working for AVSA in 1994, as the part-time office secretary and worked my way up to Office Manager. I have loved every minute of those 19 years. My children graduated from high school and college and I became a grandmother while working here. I have been to 15 conventions, and have made new friends at each one. To me this was never just a job but a family. I have made friendships that will carry over into my life after AVSA. I will miss each and every one of you.

Now on to business. The Convention in Austin was a fantastic place to be. Of course it may not just be remembered as the largest show we have had in years with over a thousand entries, but a convention with no chests-of-drawers. Each convention has a little something besides violets that people remember



about it, like Chicago, the ever-changing walkways to the show room, due to construction, and Omaha, with the toilets sitting out in the hall, also because of remodeling and construction, as Austin will be remembered for its lack of drawers.

But, even without those drawers, everyone had a great time. The violets were awesome, big and beautiful, and the designs were so creative. I love the mirror image designs the best, and there were even a few of those.

I would like to thank all the local club members who helped us with the Registration desk. And, a big thanks to Ann-Marie Keene for all of her help. Amy and I really appreciate all of you. Amy will need a lot of help next year as she tackles this alone. Volunteer to help her and have the best position at convention. You get to say "hello" to everyone that comes in. It is a fun place to be!

Again, I will say goodbye to you all. I wish our society many more years of helping people to know and grow African violets, and to each member, my thanks for being a part of my life for the last 19 years.



## Membership Awards

This year AVSA is pleased to acknowledge two commercial vendors for their efforts to obtain new members for AVSA. Pat Hancock Pat's Patch/Buckeye Violets in Ohio obtained 11 new members. Rob and Olive (Ma) Robinson of the

Violet Barn in New York signed up 77 new members for AVSA. Not only are these people superb hybridizers, but they find the time to promote AVSA in a big way. Thank you for all you do for AVSA!

# In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, The Indiana Academy

Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

I'm always glad when growers keep their eyes open for changes in their plants. Many times these changes are new sports or mutations. Sometimes these mutations are just curiosities, but frequently in African violets they have been the start of something new. I recently received an e-mail from Andy Kung in Melbourne, Australia, about a change in his species plant of *Saint-paulia rupicola*. The plant was showing variegated areas in the foliage.



The *S. rupicola* sport shows random areas of white in the leaves. This appears to be an example of the random variegation type that was reported in many variegated plants of the late 1940's and 1950's. This type of variegation is very difficult to propagate except from crown cuttings. Leaf cuttings of random variegated plants often come up solid white or revert back to green. Since *S. rupicola*

tends to grow as a multi-crown plant, it should be possible to propagate this variegation for further enjoyment. Thanks for reporting your find and good luck with the propagation.



This is the second report I'm aware of with a sporting of a species plant or clone to show variegation. The previous report was with the clone Mather No. 21 which was showing crown variegation. Interestingly, this sport was also reported from Australia. I'm not sure why variegation is showing up "down under," but I find it curious that the two reports of variegation in the species plants are from the same country. I was able to put the two discoverers of the variegated plants in touch with each other and the variegated Mather No. 21 clone is still growing and doing fine.



**Q: Following up on the trailer questions in your last column, what exactly makes a trailer a trailer? Plenty of plants sucker, but that doesn't make them a trailer? Does a trailer always have some of the species violets in their background?**

A: Thanks for asking a basic question about trailers. The difference genetically in a trailer is that a trailer has the ability to stretch out the stem between the leaves. The place where a leaf attaches to a stem is called a node. The stem areas between the nodes are called internodes. The rosette plants have extremely short internodes and the leaves all originate from nearly the same point. This makes the rosette plants compact with

the leaves radiating from a single center. In a good trailer, the internode areas are several times longer. This trait stretches the length of the entire stem and produces the trailers. In some extreme cases of trailers, I've seen the internode areas stretch out to over a centimeter (about a half inch) or more.

Many of the species plants are trailers, or have the longer internodes. The long internode trait also releases the inhibition of the axillary buds at the base of the leaves allowing the stem to branch. Plants with these traits produce the best trailers. So, yes, trailers usually have a bit of the species plants in them.

***Q: A plant that I have from a commercial grower is showing spooning in the foliage. Otherwise the plant fits the description from the hybridizer. Is the plant sporting or is something else going on?***

A: The person sending this question identified the hybridizer and commercial grower of the plant showing the spooning in the foliage (the foliage cups upward on the edges in the shape of a spoon). Further correspondence with the writer revealed that they grow their plants indoors under lights, much different conditions than the hybridizer and commercial grower uses. While it is possible that the plant has sported, I would suspect that the change in foliage from flat to spooning is more a response of the plant to cultural changes.

Plants that are developed and grown under natural light and greenhouse conditions are not going to grow the same way under controlled temperatures and artificial lighting. The environmental conditions are just too different and genes will be expressed differently as the plant grows.

Spooning is thought to be a genetic recessive condition. I've grown 'Buckley's Spoon' which expresses the spooning trait very well, but even then I've seen this plant change the amount of spooning depending on the environmental conditions. We must always remember that the final way a plant grows is a function of its genetics as influenced by the growing environment and cultural conditions.

***Q: I'm interested in some of the unusual leaf traits. Could you cross a longifolia-leaved plant with a girl foliage plant? If so, what would the offspring look like?***

A: I don't see any reason why you couldn't cross a longifolia (long, stretched leaves) plant with a girl foliage (round, ruffled leaves with a white spot where the petiole joins the leaf blade) plant. Both leaf traits are genetic dominant traits and should be able to express in the first generation.

While some of the offspring might have just one trait or the other, some of the offspring should try to express longifolia and girl foliage together. I'd anticipate that the leaves would be longer than wide and ruffled to some degree, possibly intensely ruffled. The girl foliage trait tends to miniaturize the leaf size so the leaves would be smaller than those of the longifolia parent.

Overall, I can imagine that the leaves would look like a stretched out version of the girl foliage parent. This would certainly be an interesting cross to make, although I suspect the foliage would be very wild and not lay flat for show purposes. If you do make such a cross, let me know if my speculations turned out to be correct.



## AVSA's Facebook Page

AVSA has its very own Facebook page, with over 500 friends! Please take a moment to stop by and "like" our page! Be sure to post your club's shows, meetings, awards, or other club and African violet information. Thank you, Ann-Marie Keene, for helping to keep our Facebook page up-to-date!

# Question Box

By Sue Haffner

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Email: [sueh@csufresno.edu](mailto:sueh@csufresno.edu) • [haff.sue2@gmail.com](mailto:haff.sue2@gmail.com)

Dear Friends,

Clearing out my back bedroom where I keep most of my growing supplies – not to mention a heap of plant books and periodicals – I came upon a jar full of old plant labels. Our club for many years used color-coordinated labels for our sale plants: pink labels for pink-flowering plants, etc., yellow for bi-colors. We would write brief descriptions on the tags. I was amazed at how many of these violets I not only hadn't grown for years but which I was sure no one in our club still grew. It was kind of sobering, in a way, but it also shows the dynamism of the hobby, of how the hybridizers keep us busy trying new varieties. (Now, just to provide an update, our sellers print out descriptive labels from the AVML.)

This spring our club participated in the big home and garden show at the fairgrounds, holding our show and sale there. It's a great venue, with thousands of people surging through the buildings. Many people stopped by our show; some had questions about violets; some purchased new plants from us. By Sunday afternoon our sale tables were pretty much bare. I always hope I will get some questions that I can use in this column! One lady regaled me with a tale about a rat that got into her house and was chewing up her violets – not eating them, just biting off the leaves and strewing the bits around. She asked for advice regarding the rat; I suggested an exterminator.

The first question that I dealt with in my previous column (March-April issue) was from a grower whose recently potted baby violets were collapsing and dying. She and I traded emails for a while. She belonged to a local club and finally had a couple of more experienced growers come by and take a look. It turned out that she was using a potting mix that was too heavy for her



wicked pots, and the pots were too large for the plants (as I had suggested could be the case.) The saturated potting mix was killing her plants. She has changed her soil mix, repotted into appropriate-sized pots, and her collection is on the road to recovery.

***Q. I was having an argument with another grower about perlite. He says it absorbs water – otherwise, why do they call it “sponge rock” – while I am sure that it doesn't. Who is right?***

A. Isn't it funny: I had never thought about the implication of the term “sponge rock.” Of course, someone new to the product would be justified in the belief that it is an absorbent, sponge-like material. Perlite is a volcanic glass, found in ancient lava flows. Trapped water in the glass expands when the perlite is heated to between 1400 and 2200 degrees Fahrenheit, causing it to pop like popcorn. The resulting material has many applications; we're concerned with its horticultural use. Generally, growers use it to improve drainage in potting mixes. While individual pieces of perlite do not absorb water, moisture can be held by surface tension in the spaces between the particles. I'm sure we've all experienced repotting a plant and finding a mass of wet perlite at the bottom of the pot. Yet if you crush one of the pieces between your fingers you find that it's basically dry inside. So, you are the winner of the argument, I would say. I've written before about perlite, about the “fines” that fill most of the bags we purchase; about the current practice of some companies to add fertilizer to perlite (why?); about the availability of all but the smallest sized perlite. Most run-of-the-mill garden shops offer only the small perlite supplied by major commercial distributors, but larger sizes are available from online sources, especially those devoted to orchid growing.



*Q. My violets have been driving me crazy. Every time I bring a new one home it will start to grow with a very tight center and then growth will slow down and stop altogether in some cases. Many of them never bloom again. I've thought it might be cyclamen mites, but the leaves look healthy and green despite being small and stiff. I know what mite damage looks like, though, and that's not what this is. I grow a bunch of different kinds of plants on my light stands, including cacti and succulents, and they seem happy. What am I doing wrong with the violets?*

A. This grower's collection encompasses a wide variety of plants. It could be that the temperature and humidity are not ideal for violets. After further questioning, it turned out that she had recently increased the number of tubes in her lighting fixtures, and I suspect that her violets were showing the effects of too much light intensity and perhaps too much heat. I suggested that she set aside a shelf just for violets, with more moderate temperatures and enhanced humidity – or even that she try growing the violets on a window sill. Putting a few violets in a new situation will not hurt them, and it might help her to see what needs to be done for all of her struggling plants.

*Q. What makes African violet blossoms sparkle?*

A. What an interesting question. Yes, I love looking into violet blossoms and seeing that sparkle. I have read about what produces similar light effects on plant leaves, especially begonia leaves. As I recall, there is a layer of clear, bead-like cells on the surface of the leaf that reflects the light. Also, some plants which originate in low-light situations, such as a forest floor, possess layers of translucent cells which allow light to enter the leaf from all directions and be reflected back through the cells again, enhancing the amount of light available for photosynthesis. I realize that this is speaking of leaves, not blossoms. But our violets are native to low-light situations in the mountains of east Africa. I wonder if the blos-

soms, even though they are not responsible for photosynthesis, somehow evolved a similar means for increasing the availability of light. Possibly the sparkles attract pollinators; that could be a more plausible explanation. We've all seen photos of what a flower looks like through a bee's eye. Or – I could be totally all wet about this, and it's something else altogether! If someone knows for sure, I hope they will get in touch with me.

*Q. What can you tell me about foliar feeding? Is it worth the extra work?*

A. A champion grower in my club years ago swore to the efficacy of foliar feeding, and no one could argue with her results, as her plants were magnificent. She used a very dilute fertilizer in a spray bottle of very warm water and misted the solution over her plants so that it settled on the leaves, then she sprayed the undersides of the leaves. She said it was important to keep the plants out of drafts or direct sun while the leaves are wet and also that you should do it when the room temperature is between 72 and 80 degrees, or so. After an hour she would blot the leaves dry. This was a supplemental means of feeding, as there is some question as to whether fertilizer applied this way ever reaches beyond the leaves. There is also the possibility of over-fertilization if you are also feeding with every watering, or every other watering. I have also read that foliar feeding of a nitrogen fertilizer, such as fish emulsion, will green up plantlets that display too much variegation to grow well on their own. I would say that just the act of picking up the plant and putting it out for foliar feeding is beneficial, as it gives the grower a change to get a close look at the plant, to do some grooming, to catch any developing problems. You might try this with a few of your plants, doing it once a month, and see how they respond. It's important, though, to be consistent in this as in any other cultural regimens.

*Q. I need to get better organized to start a repotting project. By the time I have plants divided, soil mix ready, I find I need to do something with clean hands, such as*



*writing labels, and this slows me down. I never get as much done as I plan to. Can you help?*

A. I understand what you mean. I would recommend attacking such a project in a more organized way. Set a time in the week (or month) when you know you have at least a couple of hours you can devote to the task. Know in advance which plants you are going to work on and get the pots labeled and ready, the wicks cut and in water, the potting mix prepared. Try to be focused on just those plants you're working on and not get distracted by others you see that need work. (Easy for *me* to say!) I have to cite a former member of our club who did her repotting on Sunday afternoons, after church and after lunch. She grew only minis, so had the pots all labeled, wicked, wet perlite in the bottom of each, all ready when she could turn her attention to it. Only in this way was she able to keep her minis constantly repotted. Her plants were always lovely. (One day, though, her big cat jumped into the

middle of the table, sending little pots of mix flying every which way ... but that's another story.)

*Q. Can I re-use my dehumidifier water on my plants? It looks clean, to me, but others say not to do it.*

A. Living in an arid climate, I don't have a dehumidifier, but I researched this issue. Technically, your used water is what is termed "gray water." It does contain dust, pollen, mold and other irritants. It also may be contaminated by copper, and aluminum, not to mention undesirable microorganisms. I certainly think it would be okay to use it on your outdoor plants. The manufacturers of the products do not recommend re-using the water, but of course they don't want to get sued by anyone. Something to take into consideration is how clean you keep your dehumidifier – do you follow the manufacturer's instructions. I'm agnostic on this. I would recommend testing the water for pH and maybe using it on a few plants and check for any deleterious effects.



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

## *Rob's Soliloquy*

*Exhibited by:*

*Sandra Skalsky*

*Hybridized by:*

*R. Robinson*

*Miniature*



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Optimara Little Crystal*

*Exhibited by: Anne Brown*

*Hybridizer: Holtkamp*

*Miniature*

# Technically Speaking...or Not

By Neil Lipson

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## Fertilizers – Tips, Tricks, and Tweaks

This article will cover how to use fertilizer for your African violets, how much, what kind, and what to do and not do. It will discuss what the casual grower and also the competition show-grower will need to do to get the best growth and blossoms for your plants. I spoke to many top growers, ribbon winners, and manufacturers, because in this article as well as all my other ones, I want to get it right the first time. Growers value their plants, and I am sensitive to getting them accurate information to get the best results as much as possible.



### N-P-K and Urea

Conventional wisdom says to use 20-20-20 (or 14-14-14) for growing and 12-36-12 for blooming. Not necessarily. It also says to never use urea on your plants. Again, not necessarily. But first, let's discuss what the N-P-K numbers mean. The N is nitrogen, P is phosphorous, and K is potassium (also called Potash) and is given as a percent of the total. Nitrogen is for growth, Phosphorous is for root and shoot growth and blooming, and Potassium (K) is also for blooming. *But there's more!* Potassium also gives you a higher quantity of blossoms, better vibrance to the colors, and longevity to the blossoms. This is important to African violet growers, especially during the shows. I am not recommending one over the other, but many successful growers use the 14-14-14 all year round, and I will try this on most of my plants, except the ones that need the bloom booster.

Many growers are concerned that they must avoid fertilizers that have urea, but there is more the grower needs to know. Urea is broken down

more slowly in the "soil" and if you don't have soil (like a soilless mixture), it will build up and could then "burn" the roots. The ability of a fertilizer to release its components is called **bio-availability**. In speaking to numerous experts, it appears that the maximum urea should not exceed about 7%. However, I have been using Jack's 20-20-20 for years, which has 17%, and have never had a problem. Why? Primarily because I

don't use mats or wicks for my plants, **AND** I add a good amount of Baccto soil to the mix. The Baccto has a high level of beneficial bacteria in it to break down the urea, and therefore improves the bio-availability of the nitrogen in this case. One important point: I attribute the better growing of my plants to Baccto soil, which comprises 25% of my soil mix. In addition, Baccto provides a lot of the micro-nutrients and reduces the need for "rotating" fertilizers, which some growers practice. Mats and wicks will cause the plant to pull in more fertilizer than top watering. Most wick growers dilute their fertilizer substantially, and this reduces but does not eliminate the problem with urea. Also, I should point out that, when I spoke to Dr. Cari Peters at Jack's (formally Peters Fertilizer), she said she used a higher grade of urea that was biuret free. I did not find a lot of data on biuret, so I will not go into a long discussion of it; but, if you use a non-urea formulation, you eliminate the possibility of urea problems completely. I should also say that the 20-20-20 Jack's formula is a general purpose fertilizer not designed for African violets. Fertilizer manufacturers that cater to AV growers are DynaGro, Plant Marvel, Jack's (for their blooming formulas,) and

Optimara. Keep in mind, that at this time Plant Marvel only sells 25 lb. bags of the 14-12-14, so if you're a club, buy one bag and split it up.

Fertilizers, in general, have a long shelf life, especially with powders, which last just about forever. Because you are dealing with elemental chemistry, the compounds will not "deteriorate" the way that complex compounds, such as insecticides, will.

Now keep in mind they are hygroscopic (absorb humidity) and will "cake" up on you. So, to prevent this, keep small quantities on hand and store the majority of the fertilizer container in a freezer bag at room temperature.

### **Water Quality and Fertilizers**

There is one major point I will make right up front and that is, unless you have a high quality water source, you are playing Russian roulette with your plants. Even a slight change in pH will affect the action of the fertilizer. pH is on a logarithmic scale and going from 7.5 to 8.5 is a 10 times increase! I discussed this at length in my previous article on Water Quality and pH (May/June 2013 AVM) and would highly recommend that if you did not read it, you do so, as there are specific recommendations on what filters to use to clean your water source. The ideas I discussed will save you from having to buy expensive pH meters; so, unless you have a really clean water source with no chloramines and a pH of about 7.0, invest in the solution I discussed. If you have any doubt, call me at the number below. I improved my water about a year ago, and I almost doubled the number of ribbons I won at the AVS of Springfield 2013 show. Of course, I gained more experience, but the last year was substantial in gains.

I know the president of another club who had a serious pH problem with her water and wasn't able to enter any plants into any of the shows. She corrected her water problem and went on to win most of the ribbons in the next show. This is an excellent example of why you want to make sure that your water is good enough for your plants. The most expensive fertilizer in the world will not work in poor water.

### **Consistency and Reducing Your Variables**

What you want is consistency in the growth and blooming of your plants. To achieve this, I recommend that you eliminate as many variables as possible. For example, clean water, constant temperatures (as much as possible), and the same soil mix with no changes. Consistency is the key. A big fan of consistency is Ron Nadeau, and I would like to thank him for mentioning this to me. When he does his experiments, he minimizes as many variables as possible. I feel that he is a true AV scientist.

Now for some surprises I found. For decades I have used 20-20-20 for growing and 12-36-12 for the shows and blooming. However, after talking to numerous "megastars" of the AV world, I was told by most of them that they used a 14-14-14 (plus or minus) fertilizer all year long, show or no show. But there's more. Joan Santino told me that her 'Sugar N' Spice' exploded in blooms when she used 5-50-17. So I tried this at my last show, and sure enough, my 'Sugar N' Spice' did the same! However, I only used it for two weeks before the show for that particular plant. Now that tells me that some plants need that extra boost, which others don't. Which ones, you ask? EXPERIMENT! Yes, it's more work, but it surely does pay off with ribbons and rosettes, if that's your goal. I know that some growers like Sandy Skalski and Lindi Wurzer experiment all the time. For example, Sandy keeps an Excel chart on whether a particular AV blooms early or late. She then makes adjustments in her growing schedule. It is growers like Sandy and Lindi that improve the growing and blooming of our plants. There should be more of this.

In the twenty-seven years that I have been growing violets, I found one interesting fact that is never mentioned. If you are doing everything right, and only one of the variables is off, frequently you will still have good results. However, if you have two or more variables off (like incorrect soil mix AND too little light, for example), you will see problems. However, some things are unforgiving and will stop things cold, and one example of this is poor water quality and fluctuating pH. That will stop your plants from bloom-

ing and growing properly on the spot. This is why water quality is so important.

### How much Fertilizer?

Now, what can you do for shows? Instead of using 1/8 tsp. of 14-14-14, use 1/4 tsp. for shows, for a few weeks before the show. This will give you the equivalent of 28-28-28. Keep in mind that the 3rd number, potassium, should be almost as high as the 2nd number, phosphorus, for the best blooming. This is where you titrate your dose, which means *adjusting it to fit your needs*.

What would cause you to need to use more or less? Humidity, temperature, soil composition, and other factors. One way to work around this problem is to measure how much fertilizer you need, regardless of how much water you use. Let's say you use a total of 28 grams (one ounce) a week, and the humidity drops, so you use the same amount in more water. That way your plants get the correct amount regardless. Many of the top growers use a certain amount per gallon and stick with it.

Remember, if you grow miniatures, use a 7-9-5 NPK, or about half of the 14-14-14. For starting plants, pick a fertilizer with a high phosphorus number.

### Micro-nutrients

Now, we'll talk about micro-nutrients in the fertilizer. In the enclosed chart we are seeing the analysis of one of the top African Violet fertilizers, Plant Marvel African Violet special 14-12-14 Plus. This particular fertilizer is available only in 25 pound bags, so if you have a club, buy one and split it up. Notice the micro-nutrients listed. You want to titrate the dose so you get the blooms for the show, but don't overdo it. This is what Joyce Stark said in the AVSA FAQ section:

*Toxic levels of one or more of the micro-nutrients (some-*

*times called trace elements) in fertilizer can cause stunting. In this case, a large standard plant might suddenly have a center that looks perfectly miniaturized with a large gap between the big outer leaves and the very petite center leaves. This is the result of a toxic build-up of the micro-nutrient and appears to be irreversible once it reaches this stage. It happens most commonly when the minerals in the water are already providing the needed nutrient... the addition of fertilizer adds a second dose and it quickly becomes too much. Occasionally the water pH level allows too much of the micro-nutrient to be absorbed, and correcting the pH can prevent further problems.*

### Conclusion

You can use either a growing fertilizer and a blooming one for shows, or use a single growing one all year round. Unless you know what you're doing, avoid urea fertilizers. And if what you are presently doing is giving you excellent results, remember the expression: "*if it ain't broke, don't fix it*".

<b>Guaranteed Analysis</b> (For continuous liquid feeding)			
<b>14-12-14+</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Lbs/Ton</b>	<b>Concentration</b>
Total Nitrogen (N)	14%	280	200 PPM as N
8.88% Ammoniacal Nitrogen			
5.12% Nitrate Nitrogen			
Available Phosphate (P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> )	12%	240	171 PPM as P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>
Soluble Potash (K <sub>2</sub> O)	14%	280	200 PPM as K <sub>2</sub> O
Magnesium (Mg)	0.49%	9.8	7 PPM as Mg
0.49% Water Soluble Magnesium (Mg)			
Sulfur (S)	8%	160	114 PPM as S
8% Combined Sulfur (S)			
Boron (B)	0.05%	1.0	0.71 PPM as B
Copper (Cu)	0.05%	1.0	0.71 PPM as Cu
0.05% Chelated Copper (Cu)			
Iron (Fe)	0.10%	2.0	1.43 PPM as Fe
0.10% Chelated Iron (Fe)			
Manganese (Mn)	0.01%	0.20	0.14 PPM as Mn
0.01% Chelated Manganese (Mn)			
Molybdenum (Mo)	0.0035%	0.70	0.05 PPM as Mo
Zinc (Zn)	0.05%	1.0	0.71 PPM as Zn
0.05% Chelated Zinc (Zn)			
Derived from Ammonium Sulfur, Ammonium Phosphate, Potassium Nitrate, Sodium Nitrate, Borax, Sodium Molybdate and the EDTA form of Copper, Iron, Manganese, and Zinc. CAUTION: This fertilizer is to be used on soils which responds to molybdenum. Crops high in molybdenum are toxic to grazing animals. Potential acidity equivalent to 751 lbs. Calcium Carbonate per ton.			



## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Anne Nicholas, Sandy Skalski, Peggy Mooney, Jeannie Myers, and Paula Bal, to name a few, for their help on this article. In addition, I would also like to give special thanks to Joe Slater at Plant Marvel for his in-

valuable information and technical help with what African violets need in fertilizers.

*Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant. He can be reached by emailing him at [ndlipson@gmail.com](mailto:ndlipson@gmail.com) or calling 610-356-6183 after 1 pm Eastern time. He will return your call.*

# Nashville "Music City," Tennessee You are invited to the 2014 AVSA 68th Convention and Show in 'Music City USA,' Nashville, TN.

Ron Davidson, 2014 Convention Chairman

Mark your calendars - Sunday, 25 May, 2014 to Saturday, 1 June, 2014.

There is so much to see and do in Nashville. When planning your trip to the AVSA convention and show, be sure to consider staying over, or coming a few days early to see some of the attractions and live entertainment.



**Downtown  
Nashville**

Nashville is strategically located, with over fifty percent of the U.S. population living within 650 miles of Nashville. That is as far east as Washington D. C. and Baltimore, west to Oklahoma City and Dallas, north to St Paul, MN, and Buffalo, NY, and south to Tampa, FL. If you are driving to Nashville, this is a one-day trip for a lot of our members. For those of you flying in, the airport is on one side of I-40, and the hotel is on the other. There is also a free shuttle to the airport.



**Grand Old Opry**

The Sheraton 'Music City' Hotel is our convention location. It is a beautiful hotel located on the top of a hill, with the Show, Commercial Sales, and AVSA Presentations all located on the main floor. There is lots of free parking around the hotel, and it is very easily accessible off I-40 for our members who are driving.

Some of the possible tour sites are: The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, The Hermitage (Home of President Andrew Jackson), the Historic

Studio Tour (RCA Studio 'B'), Civil War Battle of Franklin (Historic city and home of a number of country singers); Belle Meade Plantation (roots of the premier thoroughbred horse farm), and The Grand Ole Opry. There is always the nightly club and live music hopping at the 'Honky Tonk Row' in downtown Nashville.

To top off your fantastic time at the AVSA 2014 Convention, there will be free tours of the Holtkamp Greenhouses, sponsored by Holtkamp. Thanks to their commitment to support the convention and show, the tours will be early in the week. Visiting the Holtkamp Greenhouses will be a highlight of the convention, and an once-in-a-lifetime experience for our members!



**Cheekwood  
Botanical Gardens**

AVSA is very pleased to be hosting the 2014 AVSA Convention with the support of Holtkamp Greenhouses, the Lone Star African Violet Council, and the Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society. We hope you will attend the Nashville convention, eat some great food, and tour the sites in Nashville. But most importantly, bring lots of exhibits for the show room!



**General Jackson  
Showboat**

Please join us when we go 'Violet Pickin' in Tennessee,' at the Sheraton Music City Hotel the last week in May, 2014. "Y'all come pickin' them violets!"



# Tips for Growing Streps

By Frances Shilliday  
Middleton, Nova Scotia

Frances Shilliday is a member of the Annapolis Valley AVS. Originally from Northern Ireland, she was unable to find any streps for three years after coming to Canada in 1998. She has been propagating madly and spreading them around ever since.

One of the toughest and prettiest flowering houseplants you can grow is the fibrous rooted *Streptocarpus*, a member of the gesneriad family. Its long lasting and often strikingly beautiful blooms are borne tirelessly over many months. I have grown them for many years and would like to share some things I have learned.

## Electrical Tape

I use white electrical tape and permanent ultra-fine marker to label plants. This discovery has been so useful to me, and other growers I have passed it on to love it as well. Electrical tape is waterproof so the writing won't run and the label, unlike a paper one, will not rot or grow fungus. It is also not easily dislodged like a stick type label. It will peel off cleanly so there is no gooey residue on the pot and can usually be reused on the next pot when you are potting the plant on. It doesn't fade if you use the right marker (Staples or Staedtler brands work best). Electrical tape is cheap, about a dollar a roll in the hardware store.

## Forests of Africa

When growing and propagating streps, you will have greater success if you can provide an environment similar to their natural habitat: the mountains and forests of Africa. In the wild, they grow in shallow soil on the rocky forest floor of a tropical mountainside, so they prefer a shallow pot with the soil on the dry side and the air humid. They like bright light, but not direct sun, like the filtered light they enjoy under the tropical forest canopy.

Watering should always be done with warm water - as warm as you would use for a baby's bath. The plants just seem to prefer it. I find room

temperature water is too cold. Warm water runs off the leaves much better so there is less risk of accidental splashes causing damage. The soil should be evenly moist but not soggy. Allow it to dry out until the pot feels light and the plant is almost to the point of wilting before watering again.

## Summer Wilt

If your strep suddenly wilts in summer, don't assume it is dry and give it more water. Extreme summer temperatures will sometimes cause streps to collapse. Simply move the plant to a cooler place and wait till the cool of evening, when it will most likely revive miraculously.

## "Lines of Abscission"

Most streps will rest in winter. This means that you should use plain water and reduce watering frequency. It is normal to have some browning of the leaf ends known as "*Lines of Abscission*," when the plant is resting, so don't panic if your plant starts to look ugly. This is simply nature's way of ensuring the plant survives its dormant period. When spring comes and you repot, simply trim the leaf ends with scissors to a natural looking shape. You can eventually remove these old leaves when they are no longer producing buds, and by this time the plant will have put on some new growth in the center.

## Domes

I do root cuttings under ordinary fluorescent lights in shallow containers placed in clear plastic boxes (known as domes). This provides the extra humidity they love. Some common grocery store containers that can be used as domes are cake covers and roast chicken, or salad boxes. Choose those that allow enough headroom for the developing leaves.

For planting cuttings, always use the most shallow container you can safely use, as they seem to

root faster in less than an inch of rooting mix.

A rooting medium of equal parts peat, perlite, and vermiculite will work well. For best results, use hot water to moisten the rooting medium in a mixing bucket before planting cuttings. It is too easy to over water them when adding additional water. Mix thoroughly and feel it before filling your trays

-it should be lukewarm, evenly damp and fluffy.

If you find your cuttings always rot, try using 100% perlite in a polystyrene cup with no drainage holes and a shallow layer of water in the bottom of the cup.

From *Chatter*, publication of the AVS of Canada



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*In memory of Linda Wheaton*

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### Two-tone

Elaine Click, Houston, TX

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*Life member donation*

Shirley Wattjes, Fort Myers, FL

*In memory of Linda Toole, daughter of*

*Eunice Palmer*

### Thumbprint

David Bartlett, Lake Worth, FL

Evelyn J. Boyer, Austin, TX

Jill G. Fischer, Berkeley Heights, NJ

Kathleen Hartley, Sunriver, OR

Judith Hess, Greendale, WI

Norma Kunzel, Calgary, Canada

Janet Rutledge, Brighton, CO

Ann Schmit, Running Springs, CA

Carol Semrau, Anoka, MN

Elizabeth Tan, Princeton, NJ

Tustana African Violet Society,

Corona del Mar, CA

Martin S. Wright, Williamsville, NY

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS: \$664.00**

# FUNGUS GNATS

By Charles L. Cole

Fungus gnats is the common name given to a group of small flies. More than 600 species of fungus gnats are found in North America. Most species are of no importance to people or the plants we grow. A few species will invade our territory and become a nuisance pest. Only a few species will actually feed on and damage live plant tissue.

## Description and Identification

Adult fungus gnats range in size from 1/8 to 1/2 inch in length. Most species are grayish to black, but a few are marked with yellow or white. Adults have relatively long legs and long antennae. They have one pair of wings which are clear in most species but are slightly smokey-colored in a few.

The immature stage, or larvae, are legless and thread-like in appearance. They are translucent to milky-white in color, and they have a distinct dark head. When fully grown, the larvae are about 1/4 inch long.

## Life History and Habits

Female fungus gnats deposit small white eggs in the soil. They are about 1/100 inch long and are deposited in batches of about thirty each. Each female will lay from 100-300 eggs. The eggs hatch in four to six days, depending upon the temperature. Larvae reach maturity in five to fourteen days and pupate in the soil or on the soil surface. In five to six days, the adults emerge from the pupa. They mate and immediately lay eggs for the next generation.

Fungus gnats breed in moist, shaded areas with an abundance of organic matter. Adults feed on plant exudations and nectar, while the larvae feed on fungi and decaying organic matter. A number of species are commonly found in greenhouses, flower boxes, and in potted plants in the home. Often, large numbers of adults may be found swarming in a home, flower shop, or greenhouse.

The larvae are very mobile and have been observed migrating in large numbers across the surface of the soil, across greenhouse benches, or from pot to pot. Adults are attracted to lights and can often be seen in large numbers at windows. They are commonly found dead, collecting in light globes.

## Damage

It is very unusual to find plants damaged by fungus

gnats. However, when a phytophagous (plant feeding) species is present in large numbers, roots can show small brownish scars where larval feeding has occurred. Occasionally, root hairs will be destroyed. If heavy infestations persist, plants could show lack of vigor and yellowing due to stress.

## Infestation and Spread

Fungus gnats are very abundant out of doors, and it is not unusual to see clouds of fungus gnats in yards, near the home, or around shrubbery. Adults commonly find their way into the house through cracks and crevices. They may be drawn into the house on air currents, when a door is opened or closed. They are commonly transported on clothing and pet fur. The most common means of infestation is the importation of larvae or eggs in the rootball of newly acquired plants. Once established in a culture, newly emerged adults fly from plant to plant laying eggs, spreading the infestation very rapidly.

## Symptoms of Infestation

Generally, fungus gnats are detected when adults are seen flying about. Occasionally, larvae may be found in water reservoirs, on shelves, benches, or in the rootball when a plant is removed from its pot. Adults and larvae are easily detected long before infestations are heavy enough to damage plants.

## Control

Certain cultural practices aid in preventing or eliminating fungus gnat infestations. This is especially true in greenhouse operations. Over watering, water leaks, and poor drainage contribute to conditions which favor fungus gnat infestations. Correcting these factors greatly reduces fungus gnat habitat and problems. The accumulation of organic matter in or around the greenhouse promotes infestation. Removing old plant material and other debris helps in controlling fungus gnats.

If chemical control becomes necessary, a number of effective products are readily available. Adults may be controlled with sprays, aerosols, or vapor releasing strips. The larvae may be controlled with soil drenches or by applying granular materials to the soil surface and watering them in.

*From Insect and Mite Pests of African Violets*

# Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

A name reservation costs \$1.00 (\$5.00 for non-members) for each plant, and is valid for two years, after which time it may be extended two years for an additional \$1.00 (\$5.00 for non-members). Registration of the plant is \$5.00 (\$25.00 for non-members) unless completed within the reservation period, in which case the balance is \$4.00 (\$20.00 for non-members).



## Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses – Dolgeville, NY

**'Blue Haven'** (10587) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single-semidouble chimera blue star/white stripe, edge. Medium green, quilted, serrated. **Standard**

**'Clear Morning Sky'** (10588) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Double white frilled star/blue-tinged eye, green-white edge. Medium green, quilted, serrated. **Standard**

**'Easy Breezy Day'** (10589) 03/08/2013 (D. DiCamillo/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble-double lavender-blue two-tone large frilled star. Medium green, quilted. **Large**

**'Fairy Castle'** (10590) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble chimera coral pansy/white stripe, blue fantasy. **Crown variegated** medium green and yellow, quilted. **Semiminiature**

**'Frosted Brandy'** (10591) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble mauve-pink frilled star/darker edge. Medium green, quilted. **Standard**

**'Inner Strength'** (10592) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single medium blue sticktite pansy/raspberry band, thin beige-white edge. **Variegated** medium green and beige-white, quilted. **Standard**

**'Jean's Passion'** (10593) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single-

semidouble pink two-tone frilled pansy/thin white edge. Medium green, quilted, serrated. **Large**

**'Little Cherokee Chief'** (10594) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble dark pink pansy/blue-fantasied edge. **Crown variegated** dark green, beige and yellow. **Semiminiature**

**'Lovestruck'** (10595) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single-semidouble hot pink frilled large star/blue-fantasied lighter band, purple edge. Dark green, quilted, serrated/red back. **Large**

**'Lyon's Zoe'** (10596) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Double red frilled star/white edge. Dark green, quilted/red back. **Large**

**'Maddie's Magical Smile'** (10597) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Double light pink ruffled large star/wide white edge. Dark green, quilted, serrated/red back. **Large**

**'Psychedelic Rose'** (10598) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Double pink frilled pansy/blue fantasy. Medium green, quilted, serrated. **Standard**

**'Pure Serenity'** (10599) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Double white ruffled star/green-edged upper petals. Light green, quilted. **Standard**

**'Rockin' Romance'** (10600) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single chimera coral-red frilled sticktite pansy/white stripe, thin white edge. Medium green, quilted, serrated. **Standard**

**'Rockin' Rosie'** (10601) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single chimera white frilled sticktite pansy/coral-red stripe, thin white edge. Medium green, quilted, serrated. **Standard**

**'Scamper'** (10602) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single-

semidouble white pansy/fuchsia patches. Light green, quilted. **Semiminiature**

**'Stormy Echoes'** (10603) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Double dark blue star/pink and white fantasy. Medium green, quilted, serrated. **Standard**

**'Sweet Affair'** (10604) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single light pink sticktite frilled pansy/violet-red edge. Dark green/red back. **Standard**

**'Tahitian Sunset'** (10605) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble light coral frilled pansy/dark coral sparkle edge. **Variegated** medium green and beige, quilted. **Standard**

**'Zaney'** (10606) 03/08/2013 (P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single-semidouble dark plum pansy/pink and violet-red fantasy. Dark green, quilted. **Standard**

\*\*\*\*\*

Janet Stromborg – Denmark, WI

**'Allegro Buenos Notch-Os'** (10607) 05/21/2013 (J. Stromborg) Semidouble medium pink pansy/darker eye, variable darker rays,

notched tips. Medium green, plain, heart-shaped, pointed, glossy. **Semiminiature**

**'Allegro Epicenter'** (10608) 03/21/2013 (J. Stromborg) Single light pink sticktite pansy/fuchsia-red eye, variable notched tips. Medium green, heart-shaped, quilted, glossy, serrated. **Miniature**

**'Allegro Pepto Pink'** (10609) 03/21/2013 (J. Stromborg) Semidouble-double medium pink pansy/darker pink overlay. Medium green, heart-shaped, glossy, serrated. **Semiminiature**

#### REGISTRATION CHANGES

The following descriptions have been changed at the request of the hybridizer:

**'Cajun's Ethereal Fairy'** (10579) Remove "sticktite" from the blossom description.

**'Cajun's Frisky Whiskey'** (10583) Remove "sticktite" from the blossom description.

#### NAME RESERVATIONS

Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses – Dolgeville, NY  
\* Circus Star \* Crystal Lake \* Destiny \* Geyser of Color \* Instant Attraction \* Mind Games \*



Photo Credit: Barbara Reith

## *East Wind*

*Exhibited by:*

*Barbara Reith*

*Hybridized by:*

*S.Sorano/Lyndon Lyon  
Greenhouses*

*Standard*

# Testing African Violets Using ELISA INSV ImmunoStrips®

By Ronn Nadeau

In mid-May of 2013 a novice grower (NG) of African violets (AVs) gave me several plants to inspect. She had obtained them from sellers at an AV show/sale. At the time of purchase, the plants were blooming and appeared healthy. Her son built plant stands for her and for awhile all was good. However, after a few months, most of her plants were very sick. She asked, "What am I doing wrong!?"



*A very sad looking specimen of "Kiwi Dazzler." The numbers indicate leaves that were removed for ELISA ImmunoStrip INSV testing.*

NG's plants, which showed classic cyclamen mite symptoms, were tested using ImmunoStrips® purchased from Agdia, Inc. The numbers on the plant in Photo 1 show the five leaves that were used in five separate ELISA INSV tests. The leaf used in test 1, which was cut from the center of the plant and placed in front of the plant before taking the picture, is labeled "1". The INSV test of leaf 1 gave a strong positive result.

I could have stopped there and just reported that the plant was infected with INSV virus. However, because of my curiosity as to why some plants that

have these symptoms test positive while some test negative, I conducted tests on some other leaves of this Kiwi Dazzler. Testing leaf 2 (Photo 1) gave another strong positive INSV result. Would all the leaves of the plant test positive? No! Leaves 3 and 4 were clearly negative! And, even more surprising, the senescent leaf 5 was strongly positive!

I discussed these results by phone and e-mail with Agdia scientist Dr. Francisco Assis, Senior Plant Pathologist, Vegetable Crops & Seed Health Specialist. To summarize, Dr Assis said that most virologists agree that virus distribution in infected plants is usually uneven, and that it is best to sample symptomatic leaf material. However, in these, 'Kiwi Dazzler' analyses, leaves 1 – 4 all showed symptoms (crinkled, brittle, distorted) but only 1 and 4 tested INSV positive. On the other hand, leaf 5, which was INSV positive, did not show "cyclamen mite symptoms" but did show the remnants of a necrotic ring-spot (upper left edge of leaf), which is a symptom of INSV.

In Photo 2, leaf 1 is shown after being cut away



*A specimen of 'Ness' Red Velvet' with stunted center. The numbered leaves were tested by ELISA INSV.*



and placed on top of the plant. Leaf-2 is smaller than normal, stunted. Leaf-3 represents two very small center stunted leaves that were analyzed together. Results: leaf 1 and leaf 2 were INSV negative; leaf 3 was positive. From that plant, only those leaves were analyzed.



*A specimen of "Rob's Boolaroo"*

Only one leaf was analyzed, shown near the base of the plant. It tested weakly positive.

One other of NG's diseased plants, labeled NQR (not pictured), was tested. Despite sampling the very center, plus three leaves, only negative INSV results were obtained from NQR.

### Conclusions

Results from these tests indicate that the distribution of virus particles in AVs showing INSV symptoms can be spotty and unpredictable. It seems likely that this accounts for INSV negative test results (false negatives?) even when it is sus-

pected that INSV is present. However, there are other possible explanations. For example, this 'Kiwi Dazzler' might contain two viruses, an unknown virus (X) causing the so-called cyclamen mite symptoms, and the INSV virus causing the positive ELISA result. In that scenario, leaves 1 and 2 would have both viruses, leaves 3 and 4 would have only virus X, and leaf 5 would have only INSV. I consider that scenario unlikely. It seems more likely that the INSV concentrations in the plants described here were uneven, and that leaves 3 and 4 were INSV negative because the INSV concentrations therein were below the level of detection of the ELISA INSV method.

And what about the question NG asked: "What am I doing wrong?" I told her, "You did nothing wrong. The plants you obtained at the show/sale quite likely already contained INSV." (That is based on something I know but would not divulge here.) Viruses are well known for quiescent symptomless periods followed by periods of full blown viral expression. This is what makes INSV so pernicious and difficult to conquer. The plants sold to NG looked healthy at the time of sale and were not known to be contaminated. Propagation of AVs using symptomless, yet INSV containing leaves or suckers might be, in my opinion, the main way that AVs now become contaminated with INSV.

**Closing note:** I have given NG some 5-month-old pre-bloom seedlings. She is pleased and reports they are growing nicely. And I earlier did the same for another grower in the St Louis area, and she reports vibrant, healthy, blooming seedlings.

Please also read the next article.



## AVSA's Facebook Page

AVSA has its very own **Facebook** page, with over 500 friends! Please take a moment to stop by and "like" our page! Be sure to post your club's shows, meetings, awards, or other club and African violet information. Thank you, Ann-Marie Keene, for helping to keep our Facebook page up-to-date!

# “What if it Wasn’t Mites, After All?”

By Ronn Nadeau, PhD

Over sixty years ago, Helen Van Pelt Wilson (*Helen Van Pelt Wilson's African Violet Book*, 1951) and Montague Free (*All About African Violets*, 1949) wrote about cyclamen mites and the problem (tight fuzzy centers and distorted foliage, etc) they cause on AVs. Van Pelt Wilson also described another disease, called 'stunt,' which she said was caused by a virus. She wrote that cyclamen mite disease symptoms were similar to stunt symptoms but presented no way to distinguish between the two. Unfortunately, neither Free nor Van Pelt Wilson said anything about who first came up with the ideas on cyclamen mite and stunt. Did they have scientific evidence? Who did the work, and was it rigorous? Maybe there are answers in old issues of this Magazine, which published its first issue in 1947.

Today AV fans are faced with a situation that is similar to the one of sixty years ago. They still fear cyclamen mites and still have to cope with a virus. The virus is called Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus, INSV.

I now present the thought that way back then, over sixty years ago, the 'stunt' disease was INSV and the cyclamen mite disease *also* was INSV, and that today's "cyclamen mite disease" is also INSV. If I am correct, it means that nothing has changed, and that we should stop worrying about mites and miticides and redouble our efforts toward learning more about how to deal with INSV.

What brings me to suggest that cyclamen mite disease is not at all caused by cyclamen mites, but rather by INSV? The main reason is the great similarity of the symptoms of mite disease and INSV. Today, if a group of AV judges was presented with a tight center, crinkled foliage plant and asked for a diagnosis, some in the group would answer "mites" and some "INSV." Some might ask to do an ELISA INSV test before answering, but they would have to take into account the possibility of false negatives caused by spotty concentrations

of the virus within the plant, such as were encountered in the experiments described in the preceding article. The truth is that it would be impossible to tell whether the problem was mites or INSV.

But is there an explanation for how strongly the INSV virus has come upon AVs in recent years. Yes, because it is well known that populations of disease vectors such as western flower thrips can fluctuate from year to year or over longer periods of time. Also, it could be that a higher percentage of thrips are carrying the virus now compared to years ago, or that INSV has mutated to a more virulent form.

How about the fact that AVs infected with INSV sometimes display ring spots, whereas ring spots are not associated with cyclamen disease? Not all INSV infected AVs show ring spots. In the preceding article, the INSV positive 'Kiwi Dazzler' plant showed gross "mite symptoms" and possibly one ring spot on an older leaf (Photo 1 in that article). The other two INSV positive plants of that article showed no ring spots. I suggest that when an AV acquires INSV from attack by a thrips, it gets a ring spot. However, an AV can also have INSV because it was grown from a leaf of a plant that had "hidden" INSV, and in such cases there might be no ring spot, only "mite" symptoms. Incidentally, during my review of Van Pelt Wilson's book I saw a drawing (p 203) of a leaf with ring spots that looks very much like spots caused by INSV. The text with that drawing says that such spots are caused by hot sun on wet foliage, or watering with water that is too hot or too cold.

As some in my circle of AV friends know, I am a long-time seeker of cyclamen mites and a thinker about "cyclamen mite symptoms." I've spent many hours over a binocular microscope trying to find them, trying to confirm for a grower that, "Yes, I found the mites. Better toss that plant and maybe lots of others." Instead, what I have seen is a

whole lot of ugly damaged plants and very, very few mites. Mostly, I had to say, "Sure looks like mite damage, but I couldn't find a one. I'd still destroy that plant if I were you."

Today, small and large scale AV growers must worry about the two main ways of getting INSV in their plants: from thrips attack and from propagation using leaves or suckers carrying "hidden" INSV. I wrote an article about how to use chemicals to guard against thrips, which appeared in the Jan/Feb, 2013 issue of this Magazine. Guarding

against INSV that would come from leaf propagation is not easy. How can you know if a leaf or starter plant that you acquire from an outside source is free of INSV? There is no way, not even INSV testing.

However, and please forgive me if this sounds like a shameless plug for my company, growing AVs from seed can assure a grower of starting off with clean, disease free plants. The INSV literature contains assurances that INSV and the related TOSPO viruses are not transmitted through seeds.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Cherry Chimes*

*Exhibited by: Mary Corondan*

*Hybridized by: D. Harrington*

*Semiminiature*



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## ***Brazos Belle***

*Exhibited by: Jane Rexilius*

*Hybridized by: L. Ray*

*Miniature Trailer*

# 67th AVSA Convention

## May 26 – June 2, 2013 – Austin, Texas

### “Violets Dance Across Texas”

Best African Violet In Show, Best Trailer

*Rob's Galiwinku* Won by: Ben Haning of Allen, TX

2nd Best African Violet In Show, Best Semiminiature

*Rob's Fuddy Duddy* Won by: Andrea Worrell of  
Downers Grove, IL

3rd Best African Violet In Show, Best Miniature

*Jolly Jubilee*  
Won by: Debbie McInnis of Floyds Knobs, IN

Best AVSA Collection - Standards/Amateur

*Mary Craig, Silent Prayer, Mariah*  
Won by: Ben Haning of Allen, TX

2nd Best AVSA Collection - Standards/Amateur

*Cajun's Hot Expectations, Cajun's Freckleface Kid, Psychedelic Show*  
Won by: Belinda Thibodeaux of Patterson, LA

Best AVSA Collection - Minis & Semis/Amateur

*Petite Blarney, Optimara Little Crystal, Jolly Orchid*  
Won by: Anne Brown of Halifax, NS, Canada

2nd Best AVSA Collection - Minis & Semis/Amateur

*Jolly Disco, Little Blue Bandit, Winsome*  
Won by: Kathy Lahti of Annandale, MN

Best Texas-hybridized Collection - Standards/Amateur

*Lonestar Twilight, Western Sunrise, Rodeo Country*  
Won by: Ben Haning of Allen, TX

Best Texas-hybridized Collection -

Minis & Semis/Amateur  
*Jolly Peach, Red Bandito, Jolly Texan*  
Won by: Ben Haning of Allen, TX

Best Holtkamp Collection – Amateur

*Optimara Little Ruby, Optimara Little Sapphire, Optimara Little Crystal*  
Won by: Kathy Lahti of Annandale, MN

2nd Best Holtkamp Collection – Amateur

*Optimara Little Pearl, Optimara Rose Quartz, Optimara Little Ruby*  
Won by: Susan Hapner of Chesterfield, MO

Best Robinson Collection

*Rob's Pogo Stick, Rob's Slap Happy, Rob's Dodo Bird*  
Won by: Debbie McInnis of Floyds Knobs, IN

2nd Best Robinson Collection

*Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Rob's Scrumptious, Rob's Pink Buttercups*  
Won by: Anne Nicholas of Denton, TX

Best Buckeye Collection

*Buckeye Candy Kisses, Buckeye Sketch Artist, Buckeye Nostalgia*  
Won by: Ben Haning of Allen, TX

Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid Collection

*Ian-Minuet, Zhemchuzhnye Zvezdy, Kofeinyi Aromat*  
Won by: Catherine Thompson of Cedar Falls, IA

2nd Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid Collection

*Belye Nochi, EK-Boginia Krasoty, Ian-Tornado*  
Won by: Alcie Maxwell of Shreveport, LA

Best Lyon's Collection *Little Ebony, Red Tiger, Sultan*

Won by: Ben Haning of Allen, TX

Best Standard African Violet *Zhemchuzhnye Zvezdy*

Won by: Catherine Thompson of Cedar Falls, IA

Best Species African Violet

*S. 5b clone confusa Mather E*  
Won by: Ben Haning of Allen, TX

Best Vintage African Violet

*Mary Craig*  
Won by: Ben Haning of Allen, TX

Best New Cultivar – Amateur

*Sport of Lonestar Helen Mahr*  
Won by: Susan Kautz of Taylor, TX

Best Other Gesneriad *Primulina linearifolia*  
Won by: Elmer Godeny of Tulsa, OK

Best Holtkamp Memorial – Std *Rhapsodie Rebecca*  
Won by: Catherine Thompson of Cedar Falls, IA

Best Holtkamp Memorial – S/M *Optimara Choctaw*  
Won by: Anne Nicholas of Denton, TX

Best Holtkamp Memorial – Mini  
*Optimara Little Rhodonite*  
Won by: Kevin Degner of Oshkosh, WI

Best African Violet on Display Table - Commercial  
*Cajun's Pink Crepe Paper*  
Won by: B.J. Ohme of Lincoln, NE

Best African Violet in Show - Commercial  
*S. 8 clone Cha Simba*  
Won by: B.J. Ohme of Lincoln, NE

2nd Best African Violet in Show - Commercial  
*Natural Rose Gem*  
Won by: B.J. Ohme of Lincoln, NE

3rd Best African Violet in Show – Commercial  
*Precious Red*  
Won by: B.J. Ohme of Lincoln, NE

Best AVSA Standard Collection – Comm.  
*Wrangler's Dixie Celebration, Natural Rose Gem,  
Fresh Air*  
Won by: B.J. Ohme of Lincoln, NE

Best AVSA Mini/Semimini Collection – Comm.  
*Irish Flirt, Jolly Dear, Jolly Rain*  
Won by: B.J. Ohme of Lincoln, NE

2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semimini Collection – Comm.  
*Little Blue Bandit, Mac's Kismet's Knight,  
Frosted Denim*  
Won by: Ken Froboese of Boerne, TX

Best Holtkamp Collection – Comm.  
*Rhapsodie Rosalie, Optimara Picasso,  
Optimara Millennia*  
Won by: B.J. Ohme of Lincoln, NE

Best Other Gesneriad – Comm. *Kohleria 'Napoleon'*  
Won by: Patty Daniel of Winfield, KS

Best New Cultivar – Comm. *Cajun's Fair Maiden*  
Won by: B.J. Ohme of Lincoln, NE

2nd Best New Cultivar – Comm. *Sweet Affair*  
Won by: Paul Sorano of Dolgeville, NY

3rd Best New Cultivar – Comm. *Jolly Happy Time*  
Won by: Jan Davidson of Red Oak, TX

Best Design in Show *"Wild Cavern"*  
Won by: Suzanne Roberts of Dallas, TX

2nd Best Design in Show *"Fiesta"*  
Won by: Ruth Goeke of Brenham, TX

3rd Best Design in Show *"Indian Powwow"*  
Won by: Ruth Goeke of Brenham, TX

Best Container Garden *"Wild Cavern"*  
Won by: Suzanne Roberts of Dallas, TX

Best Interp. Plant Arrangement *"Fiesta"*  
Won by: Ruth Goeke of Brenham, TX

Best Interp. Flower Arrangement *"Indian Powwow"*  
Won by: Ruth Goeke of Brenham, TX

Best Dish Garden *"Edwards Aquifer"*  
Won by: Dolores Gibbs of San Marcos, TX

Horticulture Sweepstakes 69 blue ribbons  
Won by: Ben Haning of Allen, TX

Runner-Up to Hort. Sweepstakes 54 blue ribbons  
Won by: Catherine Thompson of Cedar Falls, IA

Design Sweepstakes 12 blue ribbons  
Won by: Glenda Williams of McDade, TX

Runner-Up to Design Sweepstakes 9 blue ribbons  
Won by: Jane Rexilius of New Braunfels, TX

Commercial Horticulture Sweepstakes 30 blue ribbons  
Won by: Ken Froboese of Boerne, TX

Runner-Up to Comm. Hort. Sweepstakes 23 blue ribbons  
Won by: B.J. Ohme of Lincoln, NE



# A Family Portrait

By Mel Grice

2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, OH  
Email: <melsgrice@earthlink.net

## *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue'

I must admit that I am partial to the colors purple and yellow when combined together on a blossom. *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue' was love at first sight when I saw a photo of it on the Dibleys Nurseries' website <http://dibleys.com> in 2010. Rex Dibley and his family are experts at hybridizing and marketing *Streptocarpus* for the European market. Their family nursery is located in Llanellidan, Ruthin, North Wales, (UK) and unfortunately only ships to countries in Europe. Thankfully, their *Streptocarpus* hybrids make it to the USA by way of Gesneriad friends traveling from abroad.

*Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue' has three yellow lower lobes and two purple (baby blue) upper lobes with dark purple lines in the throat separating the two colors. The blossoms are borne on short flower stems emerging from compact medium green leaves. This plant won the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year award in 2010. Quite an honor for a Gesneriad competing with all of the other plant families shown at the Chelsea Show!

To celebrate the centenary of the Chelsea Flower Show, the RHS convened a panel of horticultural experts to select the top ten plants introduced at the Chelsea Flower Show since it began in 1913. One plant has been chosen for each decade. *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue', raised by Lynne



Dibley, has been chosen as plant of the decade (2003-2012). Ten plants are competing for the ultimate accolade: the RHS Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Centenary. The RHS is giving the public the final vote on which species or variety should be named Plant of the Centenary. I voted online for my favorite of the ten – *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue'. The winning plant will be announced on the RHS website and at the Chelsea Flower Show on Sunday May 26, 2013.



Photo Credit by Lynn Dibley

Dibleys Nurseries is now offering new *Streptocarpus* varieties that must certainly be related to *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Blue'. *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Dawn', *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Damsel', *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Delft', *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Lace', and *Streptocarpus* 'Harlequin Purple' are all on my wish list. I hope my European friends are reading this!

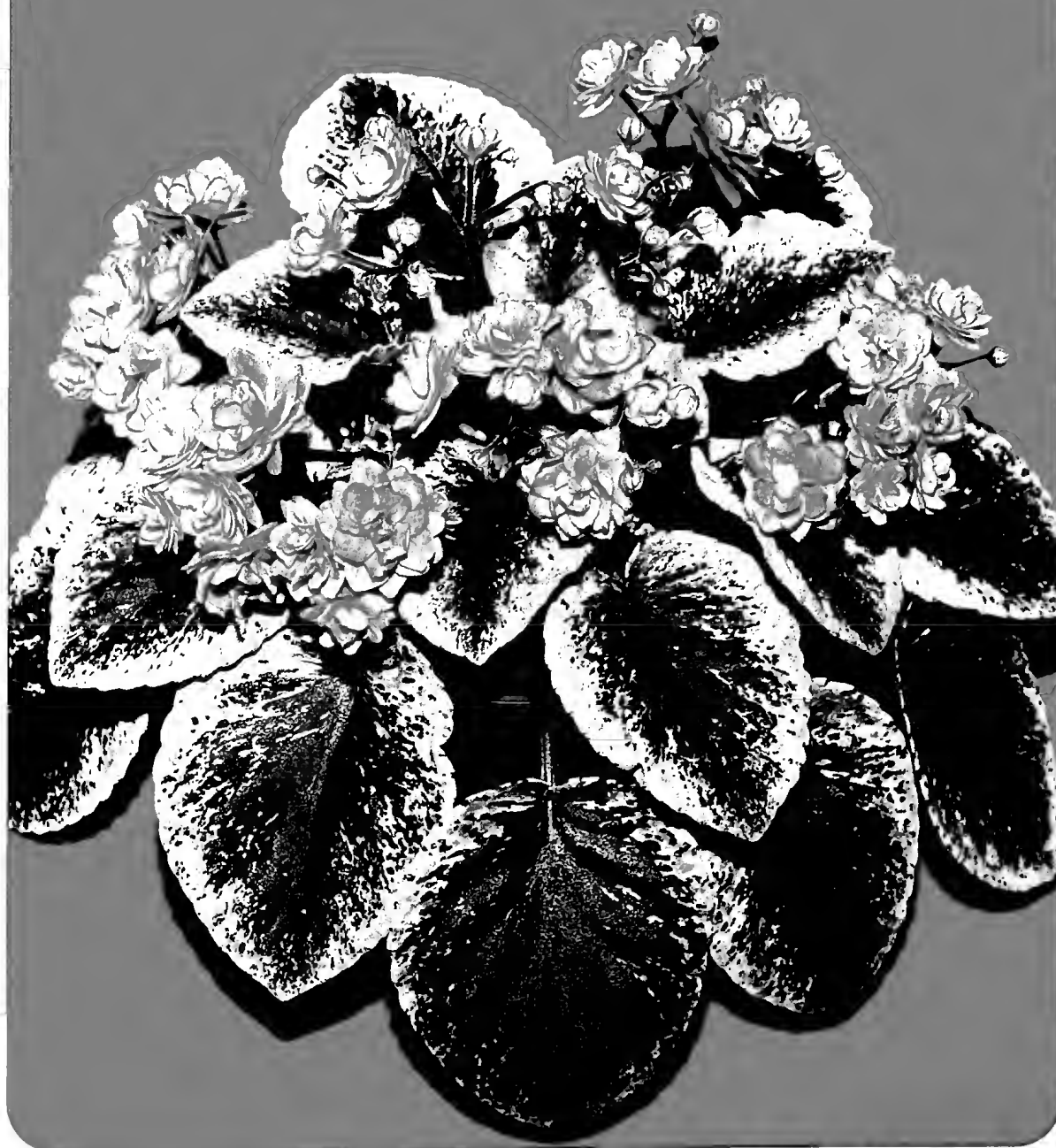


Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Cajun's Hot Expectations*

*Exhibited and Hybridized by: Belinda Thibodeaux*

*Standard*

# "And the winners are ..."

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069  
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**AVS OF GREATER TULSA, OK –**  
**Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Blithe Spirit, Pink Summit, Newtown Crocodile Tears; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Jubilee, Rob's Chilly Willy, Rob's Jitterbug; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy; Best Standard: Ness' Dream Maker; Best Trailer: Rob's Wagga Wagga; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Carol**



**Rice.** Best Semiminiature: Shirl's Snow Cone, **Judith Carter.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *grotei* Silvert, **Tena Painter.** Best Gesneriad: *Columnnea* 'Dragon Fire'; Design Sweepstakes, **Elmer Godeny.** Best Design, **Jeanne Cotten.**

**AVS OF MINNESOTA, MN – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rebel's Rose Bud, Rhapsodie Rebecca, The Alps; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Fiddle Faddle, Rob's Lucky Stroke, Rob's Whodunit; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Deer Trail; Best Semiminiature: Ness' Pixie Grin; Best Miniature: Windsome; Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subspecies *grotei*; Best Gesneriad: *Petrocosmea cryptica*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kathy Lahti.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Frosted Denim, Jolly Orchid, Rob's Penny Ante, **Patty Kono.** Best Standard: Ness' Fantasy Gold, **Mary Ingold.** Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Jude Neumann.**

**CENTRAL FLORIDA AVS, FL – Winners:** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Snake Charmer, Lil Glimpse o' Spring, Jolly Fire; Best in Show/Best Standard: Ma's Pillow Talk; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Fire; Best Miniature: Rob's Loose Noodle; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Pink Acajou'; Horticulture Sweepstakes: **Elvie Blakely.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia rupicola*, **Ralph Zaorski.** Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Cheryl Luna.**

**DESERT SUN AVS, AZ – Winners:** Best in Show/Best Miniature: Mickey Mouse, **Janice Sorensen.** Best Standard: Anthoflores Horacio, **Susan Kim.** Best Semiminiature: Irish Flirt,

**Thelma Heinrich.** Best Gesneriad: *Codonanthe* 'Frances Batcheller', **Dariane Joshlin.** Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Marty Anderson.**

**FIRST LAKELAND AVS, FL –**  
**Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Deep Sky, Ma's Grinning Grape, Sugar Plum Dream; Best in Show/Best Standard: Heinz's Good Vibrations; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Patina', **Christel**

**Collier.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Sugar Plum Dream, Cajun's Royal Knockout, Ma's Soiree; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Inner Orbit, Cupid's Jewel, Definitely Darryl; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Inner Orbit; Best Miniature: Optimara Little Moonstone; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Eryth Hendershot.** Best Trailer: Cherokee Trail; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5cl clone *tongwensis*, **Kelly Ates.**

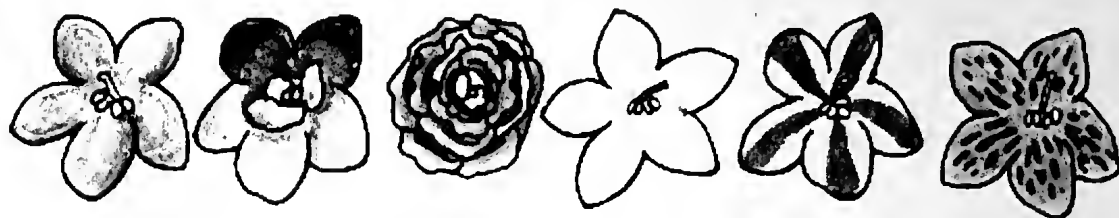
**OMAHA AV AND GESNERIAD SOCIETY, NB – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Smooch Me, Rhapsodie Rebecca, Optimara Ever-Praise; Best in Show/Best Standard: Rhapsodie Rebecca, **Kent Stork.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Queen's Sugar, Cajun's Royal Knockout, Cajun's Cherished Hope, **Mary Jo Bradley.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Zaca's Christa Danielle, Mac's Virtually Velvet, California Sunset; Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 5cl clone *tonwensis*, *Saintpaulia* 5a clone *grandifolia* #237, *Saintpaulia* 8 clone *rupicola*; Best Semiminiature: Zaca's Christa Danielle; Best Miniature: Planet Kid; Best Trailer: Bashou; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Randy Deutsch.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei*, **Joyce Stork.** Design Sweepstakes, **Brandon Erikson.**

**SOUTH COAST AVS, CA – Winners:** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cool Blue, Little Bountiful, Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Miniature: Windsome; Best Design; Horticulture Sweep-

stakes, **Jacquie Eisenhut**. Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Rob's Bo Peep; Best Trailer: Ellie Gardner; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Lavender Rosette', **Leonard Re**. Best Standard: Neptune; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *pendula*, **Chris Hedberg**. Design Sweepstakes, **Elaine Re**.

**TAMPA AVS, FL - Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Frozen in Time, Buckeye Evermore Freckles, Buckeye Seductress, **Mina**

**Menish**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Dear, Rob's Suicidal Squirrel, Rob's Calypso Beat; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Suicidal Squirrel, **Glenn Shelton**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Frosted Whisper; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *orbicularis* var. *purpurea*, **Nancy Kast**. Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* USBRG 93-083; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Mary Lou Harden**.



## My New Way of Enjoying African Violets

By Cindy Brooks

My style of growing violets has changed in the last year. I am learning to be more selective about which plants to grow and how many plants I really have the time to nurture. It has been fun to try different types of violets and other gesneriads. I am sure I will indulge my whims again, but I am ready to simplify. I am learning what types of plants grow well for me, which ones give me the most joy, and which ones just aren't worth the effort.

My favorite plants are the ones I have grown from leaves. I almost don't want to buy plants anymore because it is so rewarding to see my plantlets grow into mature specimens. Not every plantlet needs to be saved either. I am only picking out the strongest two. Trailers and minis have always fascinated me, but I am better at growing standards. I won't give up on these varieties, but I will limit the numbers.

I've also learned that I don't want a crowded plant room with multiple lackluster specimens all in need of repotting at the same time. I have given

myself permission to give up on those plants that just don't thrive in my growing environment. I keep telling myself these are plants, not orphaned children. Give them away or throw them away.

I recently purged my collection, and I feel as if a weight has been lifted off me. I pick the best specimen of each variety and let the others enrich the compost bin. As Nancy Manozzi, a fellow violet enthusiast, recently told me, "It only hurts from the time you remove them from the shelf and dump them into the trash." Then it's time to move on!

My growing areas are now under control. The shelves are neat and clean, my remaining plants have been repotted and have the space to stretch in all directions. It is only December so I won't have the opportunity to purchase new plants again for a while. I am going to enjoy this while I can.

From *Ye Bay Stater*, publication of the  
Bay State AVS



Photo Credit. Winston J. Goretsky

## *Rhapsodie Rebecca*

*Exhibited by: Catherine Thompson*

*Hybridized by: Holtkamp*

*Standard*





## ***Buckeye Nostalgia***

*Exhibited by:*

*Ben Haning*

*Hybridized by:*

*P. Hancock*

*Standard*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## ***Cajun's Fascinating Fury***

*Exhibited by: B.J. Ohme*

*Hybridized by:*

*B. Thibodeaux*

*Standard*



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



# AVSA 2013 Society Awards

Marge Savage, Society Awards Chair

## JACQUIE EISENHUT

MABEL AND GLENN HUDSON  
MEMORIAL AWARD

Jacquie Eisenhut recently won Best Design at a local show. The current Vice-President of her club, she has held all officer positions and has, for the past seventeen years, written the monthly newsletter. Providing leadership and knowledge, she works closely with new members to be sure they understand all aspects of African violet growing. Jacquie has served as Show Chair numerous times. With her advanced computer skills, she has provided many beautiful programs.

A member of AVSA for twenty-seven years, Jacquie was a Director and served on the Library Committee. A Senior Judge, she served twenty-two years on both the Southern California Council and the Southern California Judges Council. Jacquie has promoted Gesneriads all over Southern California, holding a long-time membership in the Grow and Study Gesneriad Club.

A friend says: "Jacquie has quiet confidence in every task she approaches. She is an organized and methodical person full of dignity and grace." Another friend says: "...she is very dedicated and focused to whatever task she takes on. She learns all she can about a specific Gesneriad, and then she grows it to perfection." Jacquie is a member of South Coast AVS, in California.

The African Violet Society of America applauds the dedication and service of Jacquie Eisenhut and awards her the Mabel and Glenn Hudson Memorial Award for outstanding leadership activities within an affiliate chapter.

## LINDA L. HALL

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Linda Hall brakes for little signs leaning against telephone poles reading "African Violets.". As a little girl, she walked at least a mile to Mrs. Yeager's house to buy her mother a violet for twenty-five cents. Now, she greets you with a great smile, topped with beautiful violet eyes. You open your

AVM and there she is, smiling at you. It is probably the same smile that greeted the older Violet Lady, 12 years ago when she revisited her hometown. Her "Mom" told the older lady how much she had influenced and inspired her little daughter "into a life-long love affair with African violets." For over fifty years, Linda has grown African violets and other gesneriads.

A member of AVSA for 28 years, Linda has served as a Director, a Convention presenter, is a Life Member, and a Master Judge. She has served as chair of the Awards Committee, Nominating Committee, Salary Committee, and Survey Committee. She has served on the Membership & Promotions Committee and Society Awards Committee. Linda has served as our 3rd, 2nd and 1st Vice-President, and now serves us as President.

Linda is a member and has held many offices in: the AVS of Greater Kansas City/Unpredictables AVS, the Missouri Valley AV Council and the Heart of America Gesneriad Society. She is a Master TGS Judge and frequently lectures on African violet species, "other" gesneriads, and design.

The African Violet Society of America appreciates and thanks this "Violet Lady", Linda Hall, for her "life-long love affair" of service and awards her the Honorary Life Membership and President's Pin.

## THELMA MILLER

CONTINUING SERVICE AWARD

Until recently this person toted: t-shirts, jackets, tote bags, pins, calendars, violet themed note pads, books, greeting cards, convention memorabilia, wearable art, promotional items - all to benefit AVSA. At the end of the day, she packed up what had not sold and toted it away until the next day. Thelma and her committee manned multiple attractive tables at numerous AVSA Conventions. She scheduled an array of willing workers so that she might get to eat a meal somewhere.

Thelma's willingness to give herself for the good of this Society is well-known. As Chair of the AVSA Ways and Means Committee for 6 years, Thelma

encouraged her local club of nimble fingers and fancy doers to create needlepoint pin holders and more tote bags.

Thelma is a member of Columbus African Violet Society, Ohio State AVS and AVSA - each for 36 years. She served as AVSA Show Chair at Columbus in 1992 and at Cincinnati in 2005. A Senior Judge, Thelma has served as president, show chairman, and prepared community horticultural displays and programs - multiple times - in all her memberships.

The African Violet Society of America appreciates and thanks Thelma Miller for her ongoing dedication and grants her the Continuing Service Award.

### **TERRI POST**

#### **HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP**

Terri Post has gone to the dogs and cats, and has grown our favorite plant since she was twelve years old. She enumerates legumes, counts beans, is a "bean counter." Every grandparent should have a grandchild who is a Certified Public Accountant.

Besides serving us as Director, Terri is a specialist in non-profit organizations. She has worked tirelessly for several years on behalf of the AVSA and its Executive Committee. To quote a friend: "Terri has been a wonderful resource and an active participant of the Finance Committee. She has reorganized and improved our reports, our inventory listings, our tax forms and our accounts."

A member of Loess Hills AVS, Terri has served as Treasurer of the Missouri Valley African Violet Council.

The African Violet Society of America recognizes and appreciates the knowledge, expertise, and willing spirit of Terri Post and awards her the Honorary One-Year Membership.

### **STEVE TURNER**

#### **HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP**

Steve Turner graciously agreed to Chair the 2012 Detroit Convention, the first joint convention of the African Violet Society of America and the African Violet Society of Canada. What an exquisite hotel he provided us! The Marriott Renaissance

Center is an architectural marvel! We wheeled around the corporate towers of General Motors, ran the gauntlet of the loaded Austin Promotional Tables and ate wonderfully-prepared meals.

The breathtaking view of the Detroit River, from 70 floors up, refreshed our spirits. In Motor City we "bridged" two nations, literally. We not only welcomed French-speaking Canadians at our table, but we gazed across the river at the city of Windsor, Ontario. Because of Steve's timely planning, team coordinating, publicity and months of plain hard work, our "Violets Bridged Borders."

The African Violet Society of America recognizes and thanks Steve Turner and awards him the Honorary One-Year Membership.

### **MARJORIE BULLARD**

#### **HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP**

Marjorie Bullard began growing African violets over twenty years ago. She carries out another labor of love quietly, with seeming ease, and the joy of having written. She is quiet, that is, until she rises to teach some of us the value of cybernetics.

Marjorie, the Co-Editor of the LSAVC Newsletter since 2002, pleads with Texans to write, write, write. She photographs all the shows she visits and posts many photos in an online album, as well as in First Class.

For AVSA, Marjorie serves on the Library Committee, the Internet Committee, and many online AV groups, including AVConnection and AVInternational. An AVSA Director, Marjorie served us as Chair of the Publications Committee.

Formerly of Corpus Christi, now retired and living in New Braunfels, just 40 miles away, Marjorie can ride Schlitterbahn, our famous water park, to her heart's content.

The African Violet Society of America thanks Marjorie Bullard for lending us her quiet energies and talent - and awards her the Honorary One-Year Membership.

### **ANN-MARIE KEENE**

#### **HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP**

As recently as four months ago, I sat in a meeting and heard the term "social media" for the first time. Younger members of AVSA have become

familiar with techie media early in childhood. Ann-Marie Keene is like that. Our younger members are as expert at social media as some of us were, in the days of: the party line, the nickel pay telephone and hearing, "Number please," from a live operator. This younger member uses social media to benefit AVSA.

For well over a year, Ann-Marie posted photos and information almost daily, during our transition into a new AVSA website. While some photos depict Ann-Marie's collection, many photos come from African violet enthusiasts across the country. These Facebook postings served to fill the need for pictures promoting African violets, as well as AVSA events and membership.

The African Violet Society of America recognizes the creativity and technological energy of Ann-Marie Keene and awards her the Honorary One-Year Membership.

## MARGE FARRAND

### HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Marge Farrand won the Best Canadian Origin Exhibit with "Picasso" at the 2012 Detroit Convention. The lady from Ann Arbor, Michigan, proved that hard-working committee members can also grow and show rosette-winning African violets. In fact she was Show Chair of the 2012 Detroit Convention!

Marge put her knowledge, experience, and committee members to work and provided us with "Violets Bridge Borders," a Show Room that was a treat for the eyes. The excellent focal point featured a very satisfying logo which spans the Detroit River between America and Canada.

The African Violet Society of America recognizes and appreciates the dedication and work of Marge Farrand and awards her the Honorary One-Year Membership.

## Convention Shots



*Newly installed AVSA President, John Carter, received his President's pin from his wife, Judith Carter.*



*Ben Haning of Allen, TX  
Winner of Best in Show with his plant,  
'Rob's Galiwinku,' and, Horticultural  
Sweepstakes with 69 Blue Ribbons.*



*Photo Credit: Neil Lipson*

## ***'Pink Patti'***

*Exhibited by: Laurel Brown*

*Hybridized by: M. Burns*

*Large*

# What Happened to my Beautiful Episcias?

By Robbie McMeel

After growing and showing African violets for a few years, and seeing some of the other gesneriads in shows, I thought I would like to try growing some. So, I purchased a few *Streptocarpus* and *Chirita* (now "*Primulina*") plants and gave it a try. They seemed to grow pretty well in my conditions.

The fever hit me, and I wanted some different varieties. After seeing pictures and a few plants at a show, I decided to try episcias. I bought a few plants online, and grew them pretty well, but could never get them to bloom. After talking to one of the judges, who told me that my plant of 'Jim's Canadian Sunset' was really nice, I told her that I was having trouble getting it to bloom. She told me that the humidity was probably too low, so I should try to increase it and see if that would help. Well, it did. Three weeks after increasing the humidity level in the room, I had blooms!

This space is a 12' x 24' area of my barn that I converted into a plant room because my wife wanted her dining room back! The room has an air-conditioner and ceiling fans.

Now that I was able to get the plants blooming, I wanted more. So, I purchased more episcias from a well-known grower. I liked them so much, I bought some more. By the time it was over, I had forty different varieties! They had been growing so well in the plant room for about three months, until I noticed that new growth on one of the plants had turned brown.

I attributed this to lack of water, as I had been away for a week and unable to get the plants watered. I watered that episcia well. Then, after a few days, I noticed that the new growth on a few more of the plants was also turning brown.

I knew the problem was something other than lack of water and started doing some research. I read everything that I could find and started asking questions from all the people I knew who grew episcias. I got answers ranging from INSV to too

much fertilizer. I knew fertilizer was not the problem, as I only use 1/8 teaspoon per gallon of water, but I had to investigate INSV, as I have never had this problem. After reading more on INSV and that it is spread by thrips, I had doubts that this would be my problem, as I did not have thrips

I then took pictures and sent them to as many people as I could, hoping they could help. Some thought that it could be mites, so I pulled out the microscope and examined many different sections. No mites could be found. At this point, more and more of the episcias were showing signs of whatever had entered my collection. Now, though, it was not only killing the new growth, but it was creeping down the main stem, and I was getting spots on the leaves of some of my other Gesneriads.

I decided to send a few plants to the agricultural center at LSU in Baton Rouge, LA.

I sent samples of three different plants for them to test to see if they could provide a diagnosis. They diagnosed a bacterial infection, probably caused by the lack of air movement and the humidity being too high. (My plants were also tested for INSV, Tobacco Mosaic Virus, and Tomato Spot Virus, and all those tests were negative.)

It was suggested that I spray any plant that did not show signs of the infection with a "copper" based fungicide, which would help stop the spread of the bacteria. I was also told to lower the humidity in the growing area. All of the infected plants needed be thrown out, and I was to either throw away the pots, or to wash and bleach them, as well as all the trays and shelves.

I have implemented all of their suggestions, which included increasing the fresh air flow by putting a small opening in one of the windows. I have also added a de-humidifier in the room. It seems to be working.

I had a few *Episica* stolons in a covered container that were taking root when all of this was going on. I have taken them out and put them on a shelf and they, along with the sinningias and kholerias, and other plants in the room, seem to be doing fine now.

We all have different growing conditions, and problems can pop up at any time. I hope that sharing this with you may help prevent a problem with your plants in the future.

From *The Dixie News*, Publication of Dixie AVS

## Refresh Design

By Joyce Stenger

Keeping design foliage, stems, and plant blossoms as fresh as possible in an African violet Interpretive Blossom Arrangement can be a challenge, especially at show time. This type of arrangement often has cuttings that also need to be refreshed. Blossom design categories include a mobile, under-water, or a regular blossom arrangement in small niches, or an open table, or inside large niches.

*Do not confuse blossom arrangements with plant arrangements. If in doubt, ask the show chairman or re-read the schedule.*

Once blossoms are cut from the mother plant, they require an immediate and continuous supply of water. A designer must rapidly replace life-giving nutrients and fluids to keep the blossoms fresh.

*The best method of putting fresh blossoms into a design is to cut off the blooms from the mother plant right before you insert them into the design. A show schedule may allow an hour or so before the judges arrive on show day.*

Hidden in the design you can place small reservoirs for a water supply to the blossoms. These tiny containers can be made from 1-inch cut plastic straws folded in half then hot glued within the line or filler materials. Pen covers, perfume lids, or used syringe caps can be used. Your design should be made up ahead of time with all material in place except the blossoms (and background).

*Using a very sharp design scissors or a knife, carefully cut off blossoms from the mother plant. Dull instruments bruise or crush stems preventing needed water from being properly absorbed through the stems.*

When using garden materials for your line and filler material first condition the newly cut stems by giving them a deep drink before arranging the design. (Not blossoms!) Be sure all utensils you are

using are clean by washing them in hot water with a mild soap and rinsing well.

*Cut blossoms can go into shock if the water used is too cold. Temperature should be 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Tepid water is okay to use.*

When your design is ready; usually the night before the show, take it down to the show room and find where it is to be exhibited. Put up your background material and set the design carefully in its spot. No blossoms are put in until morning. However you can put the plant with the best possible blooms under the white table cloth closest to your design so it will be ready when you need it. Refresh the design now with warm water from a spray bottle.

*Keep a sprayer full of pure warm water on hand. Tap water has chemicals that can leave residue on designs. Use bottled water kept near a warm area before using it. Spray the whole design. (Use only tepid water for underwater designs or the hot glue will fail to hold.)*

Get to the show room early. Using an eye-dropper and your bottled water, fill the tiny reservoirs with water; snip off the required blossoms, placing them in reservoirs. Adjust for best color exposure. The blossom must be the focal point of the design. You can use a cluster of blossoms, not just one bloom for more impact of color and style.

*To control pests and bacteria thoroughly wipe off each item used on the design with a disinfectant sheet. This includes bases, pens scissors, knives, holders, or tweezers.*

After judging is completed and the show room opens up for the public, you can add water as needed or replace the blossoms. This is especially true when your design is the Best in Show Design!

From the *Dixie News*, Publication of the Dixie AVS





Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *S. 5b clone confusa* Mather E

*Best Species African Violet*

*Exhibited by: Ben Haning*



## *Cherry Princess*

*Exhibited and  
Hybridized by:  
Paul Sorano  
Semiminiature*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## *Sinningia 'Ozark Rosey Cheeks'*

*Exhibited by:  
Penny Smith-Kerker  
Hybridized by:  
Dave Harris*



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

# Important Affiliate Information

As you change contact information and Officers, please send the updates to:

## Changes in contact information for the AVSA website

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## Changes in President and other Officers AVSA

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Deadlines for Coming Events for the AV Magazine  
(if they are not received by these dates, they will not be listed in the magazine)

Jan/Feb issue-November 1  
March/April issue-January 1  
May/June issue-March 1  
July/August issue-May 1  
September/October issue-July 1  
November/December issue - September 1

## For information on Shows, AVSA Awards, and Approving Schedules

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## For Coming Events

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## BOYCE EDENS RESEARCH FUND

Marlene J Buck • 17235 N. 106th Avenue • Sun City, AZ 85373-1958

Donations received from February 1, 2013 –  
March 31, 2013                      Total = \$ 432.00

### Multicolor

Albuquerque African Violet Club, Albuquerque, NM  
AVS of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA  
*In memory of Graydon Cass, husband of Margaret Cass*  
African Violet Society of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA

### Two-Tone

First Lakeland African Violet Society, Lakeland, FL

### Thumbprint

Mrs. Grace W Bailey, Virginia Beach, VA  
Evelyn J Boyer, Austin, TX  
Lynn D Campo, Hamden, CT  
Mary Corondan, McKinney, TX  
Colin Dimon, Vestal, NY  
Gerald Fadden, Farmington, MO  
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Sweet Water African Violet Society, Bay Shore, NY  
Dorothy Vogt, Lindenhurst, NY  
Lynn Wallach, Hollywood, FL  
Judy Walton, The Villages, FL

# Small Talk

By Laurel D. Goretsky

32 Scimitar Point N.W. • Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Email: Laurel@Goretsky.ca

The 2013 convention in Austin, TX, was a delight to behold. With over 1000 entries, there were many plants and design exhibits to interest and amaze all growers and attendees. One of my favorite parts about the conventions is going to the awards banquet. I love to see the surprise and appreciation of the award recipients.

Our beloved miniatures and semi miniatures took center stage this year. The best in show in the amateur division was one by Ben Haning from Allen, TX, with 'Rob's Galiwinku'. 'Rob's Galiwinku' is a semi miniature trailer with double red-orchid sticktite blossoms with dark blue fantasy. The leaves are medium green and pointed. This plant was very large and well grown. My pictures that I took of it didn't do it justice so I won't share any in this column, but you will see it in the magazine.

'Rob's Galiwinku' also won the Best Trailer in Show. Ben received many best in class awards and won the best collection of Lonestar miniatures/semi miniatures with the semi miniatures 'Jolly Texan', 'Jolly Peach' and 'Red Bandito'. 'Jolly Texan' has double dark red pansy blossoms against dark green, plain and quilted leaves. 'Jolly Peach' has semidouble peach-pink pansy blossoms. The leaves are dark green and plain. 'Red Bandito' has semidouble dark red blossoms and dark green, plain leaves.

The Second Best in Show and the Best Semi-miniature, was won by Andrea Worrell of Downers Grove, IL, with 'Rob's Fuddy Duddy'. 'Rob's Fuddy Duddy' has semidouble dark mauve-purple sticktite pansy blossoms. The foliage is dark green and quilted. The Third Best in Show and Best Miniature was won by Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN, with 'Jolly Jubilee'. This sweet miniature has single-semidouble purple pansy blossoms which look striking against the crown variegated medium green and gold leaves.



Debbie also had the Best Robinson Collection with the semi miniatures 'Rob's Pogo Stick', 'Rob's Slap Happy,' and 'Rob's Dodo Bird'. 'Rob's Pogo Stick' has semidouble white pansy blossoms with a wide fuchsia-red edge. The leaves are crown variegated medium green, white, and yellow. 'Rob's Slap Happy' has semidouble dark coral pansy blossoms and crown variegated dark green, white, cream and pink, quilted foliage. 'Rob's Dodo Bird' has semidouble medium blue pansy blossoms with a white edge. The leaves are crown variegated medium to dark green, white and yellow, plain and serrated.

The best AVSA collection of miniatures/semi miniatures was won by Anne Brown from Halifax, NS, Canada, with the miniatures 'Petite Blamey,' 'Jolly Orchid,' and 'Optimara Little Crystal.' 'Petite Blamey' has double pink blossoms with a green edge and dark green, girl foliage. 'Jolly Orchid' has double orchid and white pansy blossoms. The leaves are medium green, plain, and quilted. 'Optimara Little Crystal' has single-semidouble white wasp blossoms. The leaves are medium green, heart shaped, hairy and glossy.

The final plants I want to mention from the amateur division are the best Holtkamp collection which was won by Kathy Lahti from Annandale, MN, with miniatures 'Optimara Little Ruby,' 'Optimara Little Crystal,' and 'Optimara Little Sapphire.' 'Optimara Little Ruby' has single-semidouble purple-red blossoms. The leaves are medium green, ovate, pointed, hairy, and glossy. I described 'Optimara Little Crystal' above already so I will skip that one. 'Optimara Little Sapphire' has single light blue two-tone blossoms and medium green, plain foliage.

As I look back fondly to the Austin convention, I can't help but get excited for the 2014 in Nashville, TN. I hope to see many of you there!

Until next time, happy growing!

# How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Bugs

By Bill Price

In spite of our intensive efforts to try and maintain pest-free plants, most of us have at one time or another experienced outbreaks of "bugs." For years, I have used many different chemical products with varied success. In this article, I would like to share my experiences with using what are generally called 'biological pest control' products and which I will also refer to as "pest predators".

The predators I will be discussing will primarily deal with the control of thrips, fungus gnats, soil mealy bugs, various mites (Broad, Cyclamen, and Spider) plus some other pests.

Although many of the newer chemicals such as Spinosad (Conserve) and Imidacloprid (Marathon) are reasonably effective, have somewhat low toxicity, and are deemed safe for indoor use, I was beginning to feel increasingly uncomfortable with the concept of adding yet more toxins to our environment and wanted to explore other options. I was also feeling concerned with the emergence of insecticide resistant populations of pests due to the unwanted, but inevitable, occurrence of strains of resistant organisms developing from the few hardier survivors of pesticide applications.

As you read this, I would also encourage you to 'rethink' any previous, possibly held aversion to having "bugs in the house". First of all, our homes (and our bodies, clothes, and bedding for that matter...) are already infested with numerous species of minute organisms that have coexisted with us for a long time! This is in spite of us taking frequent showers, laundering our clothes, bedding, and vacuuming our homes! It is NOT an indication of being "dirty" nor of poor hygiene or homecare.

I preface with this as I've occasionally had energetic responses from a few growers expressing these very concerns and who were unwilling or unable to change their point of view.

To start with, I will review some basic informa-

tion about possibly our most pervasive enemy, "thrips", which denotes both singular and plural of this little creature. Not sure why we even need a singular form as they always seem to appear in plural!

In brief, thrips are tiny flying insects that feed preferentially on pollen, but also on plant juices which they extract by scraping cracks in young plant tissues, which heal with some scarring, often leading to distorted foliage or stems. Eggs are deposited in cracks in the plant tissue, hatch within a few days, then go through several developmental stages before reaching their adult sexually mature stage, capable of flying. There is also a pupal stage, just before the adult emerges, which is spent at the soil surface and is a somewhat vulnerable time for the insect. Not a surprise that under warm conditions they can produce large numbers of offspring in a very short time. The flying adults are attracted primarily by blue, yellow, and white, which explains why 'sticky traps' are these colors.

Now I will review the biological control organisms I have used and discuss my results.

The main options available to 'the public' (aka 'amateur growers') for biological control are:

1) *Amblyseius cucumeris*-

A predatory mite that effectively preys on thrips (hatching eggs and larval stages) as well as several mite species - broad, cyclamen, and spider. I have not used this species much as it also eats pollen. I'm concerned this might make it a bit difficult at times to determine if one is really as free from thrips as hoped.

2) *Galeolaelaps aculiefer* (formerly, or also known as *Hypoaspis aculiefer*)-

This is a very tiny, almost translucent, mite that lives at or just below the surface of the mix and effectively predate on juvenile thrips and pupae. It also feasts on fungus gnat larvae and any other small insect in their territory.

It is sold commercially in liter or smaller-sized canisters, in a moistened, vermiculite base. Although they will colonize adjacent pots, they are best applied; for example as a 1/4 tsp. put on the surface of each 4" or 5" pot (less for smaller pots) or right beside the pot so they can crawl up and in. When you first start applying this predator, gently tumble turn the canister to ensure even distribution of the mites. This technique should be repeated during the application process and is advised for all the predators that are sold packaged like this.

These mites will establish colonies in each pot and are effective over a long time period. When prey food is scarce, they will eat various types of soil debris, algae, etc. They will not transform into plant destroying mites and you will never see them!

The liter canisters cost around \$40, and may be divided into 1/4 l. or 1/2 l. portions in baggies to distribute to members for a single application. For larger collections, the whole canister is usually enough for one application. They are best stored at cool room temperature, not in the 'fridge, and will stay alive in the canister for 1-2 weeks. I apply these predators twice a year as a prophylactic measure.

When we have planned to share these with club members, I have taken the orders at one meeting, then placed the order for delivery during the week before the next meeting. These biological products are usually shipped very quickly from the source for better product viability and arrive within a couple days of the meeting.

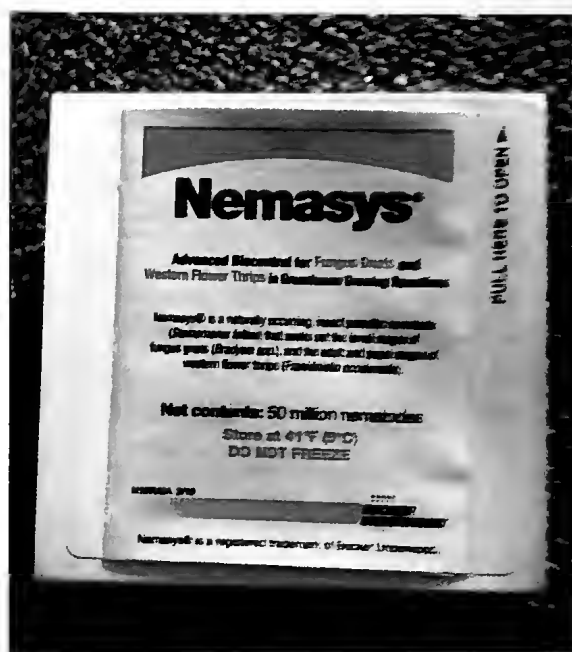
### 3) Predatory Nematodes (sold in Canada under the product name Nemasys)

*Steinernema feltiae* -

This is a microscopic predatory nematode species that will parasitize and eventually kill most insects it encounters. For our needs, this includes thrips (adult and pupal stages) and fungus gnats (larval stages). Although not marketed as such, it has also worked for me to eradicate soil mealy bug.

It is packaged in a dormant form embedded in

a finely ground vermiculite base, which is kept in the frig until ready to use. The packages are usually enough to treat a large number of pots. One mixes a small quantity of the powder in a watering can of lukewarm water, then wait about an hour or so to allow the nematode to emerge from their cysts. Apply as a soil drench and be sure to keep the mix moist for several days to facilitate the nematodes swimming about to colonize the pot. The mixed solution can also be sprayed over the plants and is effective as long as the plant is wet. Be sure to stir your mix several times while watering to reduce its settling out.



Sometimes if the mix is too concentrated, it may leave a muddy residue on the foliage if spilled, but this is harmless and can easily be rinsed off with warm water.

I understand that it is also available as a sponge "loaded" with nematodes that is soaked in water before applying the resultant mixture.

This product is usually fairly inexpensive to purchase and can be divided up into small plastic bags to be shared among club members if desired. For example, when we have done this for our members, a package costing around \$40 could be divided into at least ten portions, each of which could treat quite large numbers of plants, twice. It lasts



for months in the refrigerator and can be reapplied on a couple of successive months.

4) Atheta Rove Beetle- *Atheta coriaria*

This is a species of predatory rove beetle that I have used for the last couple of years, with great results. They are black and about 1mm long. After gently mixing the canister contents, I pour a small amount of the vermiculite base into small plastic pot saucers, one per shelf, set in the middle. When you do this, you will definitely see them scurrying off, but that's the last time you'll see them. It is advisable to use these in conjunction with *Galeolaelaps* (*Hypoaspis*) described above for even better control.

They find their way up and into the pots and start their work on the thrips. Apparently they are very voracious and hunt down the thrips quite actively. In my experience, the first time I used them when I had noticed a couple "thrips-magnet" plants with one or two affected blossoms. After a couple of days, there was no evidence of thrips whatsoever! They eat many small insects they find, including fungus gnats, and stay around when thrips are scarce, at least for a while, and tend not to fly away as readily as other predators.

Unfortunately, they are on the more expensive side, at least if you have a large collection.

They are marketed similarly to the others in liter canisters which cost about \$90. Now this is enough for my, I would say "largish collection," in several rooms in my home and at my office, which I repeat 2-3 times a year just as a precaution. I must say that since I started using this beetle, I have only noted a couple minor occurrences of thrips.



(I must confess though to some deceitful behavior...when I apply these at my office, I don't mention this to my office partner although my office manager finds it all quite amusing.)

For smaller collections, these beetles could also be shared with club members. A couple of our members found 1/4-1/2 canister more than enough for a good application on relatively large collections. These must also be stored cool, at around 10C to last longer before released.

And in conclusion, here are a couple of brief comments about some other less-common pests. I have had very little problem with aphids and when I did, found that physical methods such as squishing/brushing them off or washing them off frequently until gone, was most effective.

There is another predator for mealy bug called *Cryptolaemus* which is very effective, but better in greenhouse operations. I tried them once, but the beetles all flew away (but then I didn't really have lots of mealy bugs for them to eat and was only trying them as a preventative measure).

Regarding white fly, with which I have had very little problem, there is a tiny predatory wasp (*Encarsia*) that parasitizes white fly larvae with excellent results. Once released in an area, they tend to fly around (they are minute, don't sting, and you won't even likely see them) and eventually away so I don't think they are as effective in a home as in a greenhouse.

Similarly, releasing Ladybugs in a home for aphid control results in their all flying toward and out the nearest window or door.

There are other species of predatory mites, such as *persimilis* for spider mite control which I used many years ago on other plants with success but not recently, or with African violets.

In order to find local sources of these predators, I would suggest you do a search online for your specific area. Many of these companies, though, will ship their product significant distances so you might investigate this as well.

This article has turned out to be longer than initially planned. I hope it will encourage all growers to try these naturally occurring predators to help manage our undesired pests. Good growing!

# GROWING IN NATURAL LIGHT

By Dorothy Bullen

When you find the best position in your house to produce flowering plants, you will have solved 90% of your problems. Light and warmth are the two main essentials needed when seeking the right spot. Other essentials are tepid water, fertilizer, and a light potting medium. Plants can be killed by over-watering and over-fertilizing.

Plants can be grown on windowsills or shelves close to the light source. Choose a window as free as possible from shading by bushes, trees, fences, or wide eaves. I have two stands in almost floor to ceiling windows, facing north. Each stand has four shelves and each shelf will hold six kitty-litter trays lapping over each side. I made a nylon curtain strung on elastic, and the height from which it is hung is adjustable. It protects the plants when the sun is in the north. I also use a venetian blind. For the summer months of the year in Australia, I don't have to worry, as the sun's trajectory is so high that the eaves cut off direct sunlight. During autumn and spring, when the sun's trajectory is lower in the sky, great care has to be taken to protect the plants from the sun's rays.

The plants at the front, nearest the windows, always come into flower first, so their position is changed, usually when watering, in order to bring

other plants forward. Remember to turn each pot or tray regularly, every time you water. This will encourage leaves to grow in a flat rosette.

In winter, draw curtains or blinds at night to prevent heat loss. Reduce or dilute fertilizer in winter if your growing area is cool. If your growing area is kept warm, fertilize as normal.

To flourish, plants need all available light. Clean windows can help. If you do not have windows with sufficient light, consider using fluorescent lights.

If plants are cold, their leaves will grow down to hug the pot. To avoid this problem, as winter approaches make a collar by cutting a hole in a paper plate, slip it up from under the pot to a little below the leaves and hold it in place with another pot. Do this when the plant is on the dry side to avoid leaf breakages.

Always water with tepid water. Not only will cold water damage the roots and cause markings on leaves, it also chills the potting mix. It takes many hours for the mix to return to room temperature.

From the *Newsletter* of the  
Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

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## Which Fertilizer?

By Joyce Stork

There are a number of good fertilizers that will work well, especially those that are labeled for African violets. Our growers prefer either a balanced fertilizer (e.g. a 20-20-20 formulation) or one that has a higher phosphorus count (e.g. 15-30-15). The latter is believed to improve flowering. Fertilizers also contain many trace elements, but these are not always listed on the package.

Occasionally a grower may find that the local water supplies also contain some of the same trace elements which can lead to problems with toxicity. It is often wise to ask others in your area which fertilizer works best for them.

If you grow in cold conditions or have problems with acid pH, you may prefer a fertilizer that does not use urea as a source, as this can lead to a condition called ammonium toxicity which spots the leaves.

Some growers like to rotate and use different fertilizers during the year, using balanced formulas during times when more growth is desired and high phosphorus formulas when preparing for show.

From the AVSA Website FAQs

# Growing African Violets from Seed

By Ronn Nadeau



*Photo 1. All of the plants in this picture came from seeds planted on December 11, 2012 or later. The pictures were taken before May 30, 2013.*

On December 11, 2012, I started a test of 28 batches of seed to determine their germination rates. Since each batch was tested in duplicate, I had to count out fifty-six 100-seed samples! Some of these batches, including many that were produced using fancy bloomers and variegated foliage varieties, had lain dormant under refrigeration for years. Prior to testing them, I did not even know if they would germinate at all. I was happily surprised to find that most of the batches germinated at near the same rate as newer seeds, allowing me to combine interesting old batches into new batches for sale.

Thus we will soon offer for sale two new Selections, Fantasy (flowers with fancy markings or patterns) and Variegated (variegated foliage). Because the germination rate of our seeds is less than 50% under the best conditions, we put at least 200 seeds in each packet, attempting to assure that customers will be able to produce at least 20 – 40 seedlings per packet, even if their growing conditions are less than optimal. I recommend that when sowing, customers sow all of the seeds at once.

All of the pictures in this article are from seedlings produced from sowing seeds on 11, 2012 or later, and all the pictures were taken before the end of May, 2013.

## Sowing and Germination

Customer success and satisfaction really concern me!

The germination medium used in our testing and experiments, and the one we offer as an option with the seeds we sell, is Fafard Super-Fine Seed Germinating Mix (here called Fafard mix, or just mix). When ordering, you can choose to buy a 50-gram baggie of Fafard mix to go with each packet of seeds or you can sow on your own mix. The Fafard mix is offered because we found that our seeds germinate at a higher rate on it compared with other materials or mixes.

The 50-gram amount of mix can be used by itself in a small plastic deli container, but it might not be enough if you wish to use a larger container. Some growers use the Fafard mix as a relatively thin (0.25 – 0.5 inch) surface layer and

their own mix underneath, which works well. We sow on Fafard mix in 3.5 inch square plastic pots.

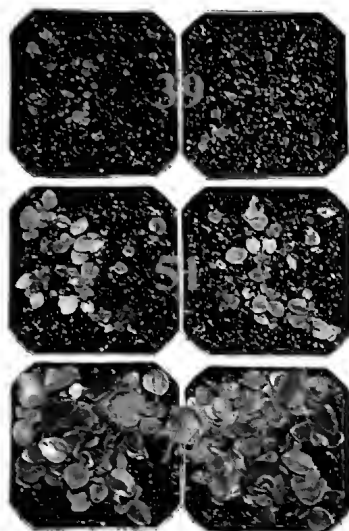
When preparing the mix for sowing, moisten it, but not excessively. We prepare it by moistening with 1.4 grams of water per gram of Fafard mix. Put the moistened mix in your container and tamp down the surface, somewhat firmly, to provide a flat and even bed on which to sow. Sprinkle the tiny seeds over the sowing surface and **do not** cover the seeds with mix. Cover the pot in a plastic sandwich bag and fold the flap under the pot. Place under fluorescent lighting, such as from 4-foot fluorescent tubes or a table lamp with a 19 watt, 5000 K CFL bulb. The tubes or bulb should be at least 12 inches above the sowing bed. **Note:** Although AV seeds require light to germinate, too much light can slow germination or even prevent it!

## Growing the Seedlings to Transplant Stage

This is the easy part, but requires patience. Just let the seedlings slowly grow within their plastic bags. You might want to remove the bags to look at and count the emerged seedling from time to time. It should not be necessary to add water to the pot while it is still covered in plastic. However, at around 45 days after sowing, the seedlings are strong enough so that you can loosen and remove the bag over the span of a few days, and then begin watering gently from the top or bottom. Seedlings seem to enjoy this change and begin to grow faster. You can get an idea of what 45 day old seedlings look like from Photo 2, which shows a pair of seedling pots at 39, 51, and 74 days after sowing. Seedlings could be transplanted at the 74-day stage or even earlier, but I prefer to wait until around 90 days after sowing.

## Transplanting Seedlings

Photo 3 shows four seedling pots and a blooming variegated seedling, with data on sowing dates and days after sowing. The variegated seedling came from a seed sown on 12-11-12 and it started blooming at its 150<sup>th</sup> day (5 months). Some of the seedlings resulting from the big germination test started on 12-11-12 started blooming around two



*Photo 2. Pair of pots at three growth stages*

weeks earlier. This provides an answer to a question often asked about growing from seed: "How long does it take to get a blooming plant from a seed." The answer, at least for my seeds and growing methods, is that it takes 150 – 150 days, 4.5 – 5 months, for the earliest seedlings to begin blooming.

In Photo 3, the pot of Miniature seedlings sown on 2-22-13, photographed at 89 days after sowing, displays the stage at which I prefer to separate seedlings and transplant them to 2.5 inch plastic pots. The Fantasy seed pot shown in Photo 3 was sown on 1-3-13, and 70 days later the young seedlings were smaller



*Photo 3. Pots with crowded seedlings, and a blooming variegated seedling*

than I like for transplanting. But, because seedlings can bloom a bit earlier when transplanted earlier, and because I was anxious to see the flowers that my Fantasy seeds would produce, I carefully separated out the five largest seedlings from the rest, transplanted them to 2.5 inch pots, and put the numerous smaller seedlings back into their pot and under light. Spreading transplanting over time is useful because the seedlings emerge over a span of time and grow at different rates.



*Photo 4. Thirty-seven separated seedlings from the pot of Fantasy seeds sown 4.6 months earlier.*

Nothing more was done with the Fantasy seed pot except watering until 5-22-13, when Photo 3 was taken and the seedlings were separated, resulting in the thirty-seven separated seedlings shown in Photo 4. Note that the seedlings vary a lot in sizes from small to large. All were transplanted to 2.5 inch pots, and Photo 5 shows 32 of them in a 10-20 tray. Ten days later, all 37 of the seedlings were thriving.



*Photo 5. Fantasy seedlings, 4.6 months after sowing, transplanted into Pro-Mix in 2.5 inch pots.*

And that's how anyone can grow beautiful, healthy, new African violet varieties from seed!

This article is about the materials and knowledge needed to grow beautiful and healthy African violets (AVs) from seed. As for the seeds you would need, I confidently recommend you buy them at [NadeauAfricanVioletSeeds.com](http://NadeauAfricanVioletSeeds.com). I currently offer



three Selections: Standard, Miniature, and Trailer. Two new Selections will be available at my website by the time this article appears: Fantasy (fancy flowers) and Variegated (variegated foliage).

Every single one of the plants produced from my seeds will be a new variety, different from every other, just as every person is different from every other. Such new varieties may or may not have stand-out attributes, and you may or may not wish to name them. If a seedling has something special, it can be propagated from leaves to determine if it "comes true". If it does, it can be registered with AVSA. Photo 1 shows the large variety of seedlings that can result from Nadeau AV seeds.

And please visit my website to learn about the awards I'm giving to people who win blue ribbons showing plants grown from my seeds. Thanks for reading.

Following are a few notes summarizing our growing conditions.

**Watering:** We water by matting. The matting material is Pellon #972 heavy-weight fleece, available from Amazon.com. We use two mat layers per

tray, mainly in standard 10-20 trays. **It is important to never let the plants go completely dry, and to never let them sit in water for more than an hour.**

**Fertilizing:** Fertilizer, Jack's Professional 20-10-20 water soluble Peat-Lite fertilizer with 0% urea, is supplied at a rate of 0.25 teaspoons per gallon of water, whenever water is added to the matting trays.

**Soiless mixes:** I use Fafard Super-Fine Seed Germinating Mix for seed sowing, and Pro-Mix BX with Mycorrhizae when transplanting seedlings for growing into mature plants and show plants.

**Lighting:** Standard 4-foot T12 fixtures fitted with one cool white and one warm white tube are used. The tubes are maintained at a distance of about 10 - 12 inches above the tops of the plants.

**Pots:** 3.5-Inch square Kord plastic pots are used for sowing seeds, and 2.5-inch square Kord plastic pots are used when transplanting seedlings. When showing large mature seedlings, round plastic pots of appropriate size are used.

### Membership Application

Application for Membership Recommended by \_\_\_\_\_ Mem. # \_\_\_\_\_

The African Violet Society of America, Inc.

2375 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702

[www.avsa.org](http://www.avsa.org)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Membership runs one year from date paid and includes 6 issues of the AFRICAN VIOLET Magazine.

- ☐ Individual Membership USA (\$30.00)
- ☐ Associate Member USA (\$15.00-no magazine)  
(Must reside at same address as a person having any other Class of membership)
- ☐ International Individual, Canada (\$35.00)
- ☐ International Associate, Canada (\$17.50)
- ☐ International Individual, other than Canada (\$40.00)
- ☐ International Associate, other than Canada (\$20.00)
- ☐ Commercial USA (\$60.00)
- ☐ Commercial Canada (\$65.00)
- ☐ Commercial International, other than Canada (\$70.00)
- ☐ Affiliate Chapter, including local, state, regional, and Judge's Councils, USA (\$35.00)
- ☐ Affiliate Chapter, Canada (\$40.00)
- ☐ Affiliate Chapter International, other than Canada (\$45.00)
- ☐ Library (\$30.00)
- ☐ Life Member USA (\$1,000.00)
- ☐ Life Member International (\$1,500.00)

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Make checks payable to AVSA, Inc.

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VISA / MC accepted Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_



**THE AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.**  
**STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS**  
**December 31,**

**ASSETS**

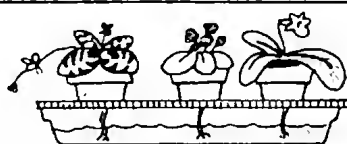
<b>ASSETS:</b>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Cash and Cash Equivalents .....	\$ 21,876.37	\$ 20,476.52
Investments .....	126,868.19	125,015.33
Interest Receivable .....	939.00	1,240.86
Inventories .....	20,055.69	29,438.48
Prepaid Expenses .....	500.00	4,115.00
Restricted Assets:		
Cash and Cash Equivalents .....	77,160.83	9,082.63
Investments .....	15,000.00	87,833.52
Capital Assets:		
Land .....	10,000.00	10,000.00
Other Capital Assets, Net of Depreciation .....	<u>42,584.63</u>	<u>46,762.05</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b> .....	<u><u>314,984.71</u></u>	<u><u>333,964.39</u></u>

**LIABILITIES:**

Accrued Payroll Taxes Payable .....	689.66	689.66
Sales Taxes Payable .....		193.40
Deferred Revenue .....	36,627.93	45,425.75
Deferred Life Membership Revenue .....	<u>109,777.82</u>	<u>113,928.67</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b> .....	<u><u>147,095.31</u></u>	<u><u>160,237.48</u></u>

**NET ASSETS:**

Invested in Capital Assets .....	52,584.63	56,762.05
Board Designated - Convention .....	5,297.48	5,207.48
Board Designated - Boyce Edens .....	6,689.45	51,235.94
Board Designated - Hudson .....	2,796.24	2,738.74
Permanently Restricted .....	92,160.83	96,916.15
Unrestricted (Deficit) .....	<u>8,360.77</u>	<u>(39,223.45)</u>
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b> .....	<u><u>\$ 167,889.40</u></u>	<u><u>\$173,726.91</u></u>



## In Memory

**Harry Drew**

Harry Drew, 85, of Concord Township, PA, passed away in May, 2013. Harry was an accomplished photographer, and part of a team, with his close friend Ron Bannister, in providing many wonderful photos for the African Violet Magazine.

Harry was also known locally as "Mr. 88 Keys" for his talent on the piano, and delighted his audiences, often accompanied by a singer. Harry will be missed.



**AVSA Building Maintenance Fund**  
**Susan Hapner - Chairman • 35 Ridge Point Dr. • Chesterfield, MO 63017**  
**1 April 2013 to 30 May 2013 • Total \$468.50**

<b>Thumbprint</b>	<b>Two-tone</b>	<b>Tustana AVS/CA</b> <i>In loving memory of</i> <i>Harry Matsukane</i> Columbus AVS/OH
Lorene Connel Pam Kopec Sheri Affolder First AVS of Spartanburg Edith Martin Mary Vasconcelles Patricia Miklica Veronia Novotney Janice Murray	Tustana AV/CA AVC of Morris County/NJ <i>In lieu of judge's expenses -</i> <i>Mary Schaeffer, Paul Kroll,</i> <i>Doug Burdick, Stephanie</i> <i>Griffith</i> First Austin AVS/TX <i>In memory of</i> <i>Linda Wheaton</i> Tidewater AVS/VA <i>In loving memory of</i> <i>William Gilliam Jr.,</i> <i>Son of Dorothy Gilliam</i>	<b>Multicolor</b> Elizabeth Kuen Albuquerque AVC/NM Garden State AVS <i>In honor of Jan Murasko,</i> <i>L. Borey, Bob Kurzinski</i> Wisconsin Council of AV Clubs/WI



## Wilting Leaves

By Joyce Stork • From the AVSA Website FAQs

Wilting leaves tell you that the roots are not able to get water to the plant. There are several possible causes. You may have shocked the roots when you repotted by trimming the roots back, cutting some away, or tearing roots away, or by working away a lot of potting mix from the roots, seriously disturbing them and possibly tearing them.

If you believe that you may have done this, then you will probably find that placing the plant inside a clear plastic bag (to increase the humidity) for a couple of weeks will help the plant recover and grow more roots.

You may have packed the potting mix down too tightly around the roots. If you think you packed the soil, you should repot it again, simply piling the potting mix into the pot around the plant, and then enclosing the plant in a clear plastic bag should help.

You may have used bone-dry potting mix that never absorbed water at all, leaving the roots in a

very dry environment. Peat moss, which is the main component of most potting mixes, will often resist water when it is very dry. When you add water to the top of the pot, the water will flush right through with no absorption at all, leaving the roots completely dry and withering.

There are several ways to get potting mix to absorb water: stirring, using hot water, or adding a wetting agent. If this is the problem, I would suggest removing the plant from the pot and adding water to the potting mix in a container that allows you to stir until the water is absorbed and the mix is damp, then repotting. Because the plant is wilted, I would also place it inside a clear plastic bag or domed container for at least a few days while it recovers. If you choose to use hot water, you must allow the soil mix to cool before repotting. Then, keep the plant a little moist at all times, to prevent future drying.

# A Beginner's Photo Journey In Grooming with 'Mac's Rouge Rogue'

By Mikki Jordan

I've always loved growing plants. Something about nurturing something and having it bloom its heart out for you, I find extremely rewarding. Last year my mother-in-law asked if I'd like to try my hand at propagating an African violet from leaf; she had some extras she was willing to let me play with. It only took me a moment to decide to give it a try, and only two weeks to kill half of that first batch of leaves. About then my "can do" attitude kicked in and I decided I **WOULD** master this! Many days and hours of web research ensued and with each article I found there were accompanying photos of these gorgeous plants, with all their variations in colors, markings, shapes, leaf colors, and variegations. I was hooked!

By December 2012 I was the proud "momma" of some tiny mouse ears, and a couple actual plants, including 'Mac's Rouge Rogue' (Photo 1),



that my mother-in-law had had sent to me. Being the typical new mommy, I had my camera out documenting every little change in growth and every new bloom. If nothing else, I thought it would be fun to be able to go back and see how much they had grown over time, like a very extended time-

lapse photo session.

My 'Mac's Rouge Rogue' quickly became a favorite. It developed these gorgeous dark red blooms that waved way up in the air above the plant, saying "Hey, look at me!" I loved it. But I knew that the actual plant itself didn't look anything like the photos I had been seeing. They all had wonderful full foliage, with perfect symmetry. Mine (Photo 2) had lots of leaves, but they were



long and gave the plant an overall spindly look. The perfectionist in me raised her head and said I had to try to do something to coax it into looking better.

I waited for it to finish most of its blooming, gritted my teeth and dove in...I was going to groom this thing!

I started by removing just a few of the pale green, slightly-flimsy leaves from the outer ring. I later learned these were immature leaves and needed to be removed anyway. Whew! But after doing that the plant was lop-sided and had no symmetry at all. My solution? Take off a few of the leaves that aren't a different color. Could I? Would it hurt the plant? Would it punish me by refusing to bloom ever again? No way around it, it had to be done, and at least I would have leaves left to

put down to raise another if this one decided it hated me. I was left with a much smaller plant, which made me rather sad, but it had a much prettier shape to it. So it was repotted, popped back into its original pot, and set under a dome for a week. Hopefully it would recover! (Photo 3)



Just four weeks later, it was already starting to fill in at the crown. The bloom stalk I had left on was still beautiful. Seven weeks after undergoing what I consider minor surgery, that little, spindly plant has filled itself in with all this new growth, all

perfectly symmetrical, and it's pretty again! (Photo 4) And it's even rewarding me with a new batch of



blooms. (Photo 5) Guess it's not mad at me, huh? It's a good thing, because there are still a couple leaves it needs to give up and then I have to get started grooming the rest of my obsession, I mean, collection. Anyone want to help?



# Vintage Violets

By Barbara Elkin - Chairman & Sam McKenna  
Vintage Violet Committee

The weather here has been delightful. We could use more rain, but when you live California, you get what comes along

My health has improved, and I am looking forward to Austin, Texas. Texas was my very first convention, hard to believe that I haven't missed a convention since.

I took my first Judges' school there, with Ruby Bircher as teacher, and knew I had failed. Fortunately, I passed and fell in love with conventions, judging, and the people you only see once a year.

With my bad health I was lucky that Vintage

Violets was slow last fall and winter. Now, with better health, Sam and I are asking you to take the time to send us your list.

We are trying to start a new Master List of Vintage violets. The old one, started in 1994, is way out of date. Some time ago, I asked for those lists and I did get a few. I know there are many of you still growing our old, and still fantastic, plants.

I think my favorite is Amethyst. This plant is in bloom for months on end. I hate to cut off the blossoms and re-pot it for show. Please send us your list of "old timers."



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# Simply Put...

By Betty Tapping

## Genus

Genus is a related group of plants whose species have more in common with one another than they do with other genera (genera is the plural of genus). The genus and species names together constitute the botanical name of a plant; the genus name always standing first. It is capitalized and italicized.

## Species

The species name follows immediately after the name of the genus to which it belongs. It is a group of closely related plants within a genus, having characteristics which consistently breed true. It is written in italics and lowercase.

## Cultivar

Cultivar is short for cultivated variety. The usual definition of a cultivar is a variety that has originated or persisted under cultivation and when reproduced keeps its own characteristics. It may be a variant of a species, a sport or mutation of a species, or from hybrid material. Cultivars are named by the person who discovers or introduces them, and the names are written in plain (not italic) type and enclosed with single quotes; for example *Eucodonia* 'Adele.'

## Hybrids

Hybrids are new plants produced by crossing two genetically different parent plants, either two different species within a genus - or two different genera. Hybrids are generally developed with a view to making some improvement in the characteristics of the parent plants. Inter-generic hybrids involve crossing two different genera. The hybrid name is a combination of the names of both genera and is written with a capital X followed by the new genus name: for example *XCodonatanthus* (*Codonanthe* x *Nematanthus*). Inter-species hybrids are the result of a cross between two species of one genus, and usually written with an x between the names of the species; for example *Kohleria* 'Flirt' (*K. villosa* x *K. amabilis*), and if it has not been named only the formula is used.

## Variety

A variety is a group of plants subordinate to a species showing one or more difference from other plants in the species. True or botanical varieties occur naturally (meaning they are not the work of hybridizers) and their characteristics are passed on to succeeding generations.

From the Toronto Gesneriad Society Newsletter



## Candidates for AVSA Board of Directors

The Nominating Committee needs you, as a member of AVSA, to recommend possible candidates to serve on the AVSA Board of Directors. When you submit a name to me, I will send (email) that individual a questionnaire to fill out and return to me with names of three references. This form will also indicate that you have suggested this person as a nominee for the Board of Directors.

AVSA strives to have representation from all

geographical areas on the Board of Directors. Please submit any suggestions for possible candidates from your area. Please include email addresses if possible. Thanks!

Please send your nominations to:

**Mel Grice**

2019 Crosswind Court

Englewood, OH 45322

[melsgrice@earthlink.net](mailto:melsgrice@earthlink.net)





Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Jolly Happy Time*

*Exhibited by: Jan Davidson*

*Hybridized by: H. Pittman*

*Semiminiature*



*Photo Credit: Neil Lipson*

***Strep. 'Ladyslippers  
Blue Moon'***

*Exhibited by: Paula Spisak*

# African Violet Pictures Need No Translation!

Here are some International websites to check out:

African Violet Society of Canada: [www.avsc.ca](http://www.avsc.ca)

AVS of Queensland Australia: [www.africanvioletsocietyqld.happyo.com](http://www.africanvioletsocietyqld.happyo.com)

Quebec AV Club: <http://club-violettes-lonqueuil.org>

AVs in Romania: [www.gesneriaceae.eu](http://www.gesneriaceae.eu)

Swedish AVS: [www.saintpauliasallskapet.se](http://www.saintpauliasallskapet.se)

From *Ye Bay Stater*, Publication of the Bay State AVS



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[www.gesneriadsociety.org](http://www.gesneriadsociety.org)

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## August 31 - TEXAS

African Violet Council of Florida

Judging School: Teacher, Sue Hoffmann

Saturday, August 31, 2013

10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Fee: \$20.00 (includes lunch)

Lakeland Public Library

100 Lake Morton Drive, Lakeland, FL 33801

Info: Lynne Wilson

[tpalynne@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:tpalynne@tampabay.rr.com)

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## September 20 & 21 - TEXAS?

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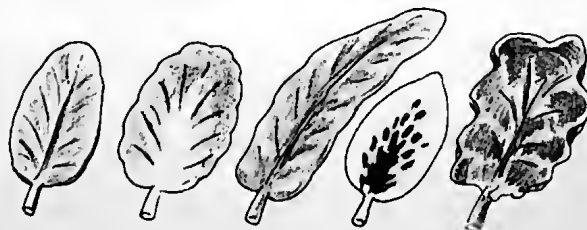
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email: [roseotx@gmail.com](mailto:roseotx@gmail.com)

Mary Corondan (972) 333-4748

email: [mcorondan@yahoo.com](mailto:mcorondan@yahoo.com)



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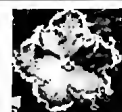
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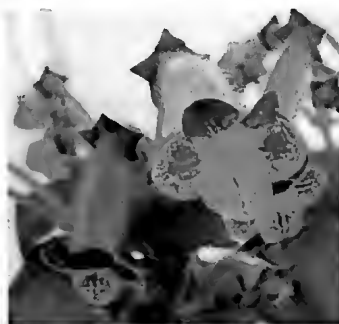
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# African Violet

MAZINE

September 2013

Volume 66

Number 5

09 2013

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Send check payable to AVSA for new or renewable membership to AVSA Office, 2575 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702; phone 409-839-4725. Remit in U.S. dollars with draft or check on a USA bank. **See Membership Application.** Master Card/Visa accepted.

**MEMBERSHIP AND PROMOTION:** Send ideas, offers to help, requests for assistance to Joyce Stork, 2501 E. 23rd St. Fremont, NE 68025. *Email* <kentsflower@gmail.com>.

**AFFILIATES:** For information on Affiliates or how to organize a chapter, write Mel Grice, 2019 Crosswind Ct., Englewood, OH 45322. *Email* <melsgrice@earthlink.net>.

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**ARTICLES BY MEMBERS, COLUMNISTS AND MEMORIALS:** Send to Editor.

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**ADVERTISING MANAGER:** Advertising rates and information: Cindi Nofziger, 1035 Lakewood Dr., Albany, OR 97321. *Email* <ccnofziger@comcast.net> (Ad rates on web site: AVSA.org) (541) 926-8116.

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# African Violet

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### On this cover: Cajun's Fair Maiden

Best New Cultivar - Commercial  
Exhibited by: **B.J. Ohme**  
Hybridized by: **Belinda Thibodeaux**  
Standard  
Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky



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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

# President's Message

By John T. Carter, President

1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

Like you, I am looking forward to the cooler weather and the fall shows and sales. The weather this year does not seem to have been normal anywhere. We hope the fall brings nice temperatures and rain where it is needed and none where it is not. It is too late to get your fall show or sale in the magazine if it falls before November 1<sup>st</sup>, but it is not too late to get it posted on the website. If someone in your group has a Facebook account, they can post it on AV-nerds and it will be seen by many people. Be sure to send the results of your show in for the "And The Winners Are" column.

Important decisions were made at the Austin Board meeting regarding the support of the future of our society. I invite you to reference the article on the membership dues elsewhere in this issue.

My first two months as your President have been very busy. There are three new committee chairs who are working hard to get their committees functioning and working to solve the major problems AVSA is facing. Terri Post is our new Finance Committee Chair. She is working to see that our investments are working for us and that we have a good handle on our expenses.

Growing our membership is critical to the future of AVSA. Joyce Stork has accepted the challenge of chairing the Membership Committee. She has put together a committee that will expand our efforts beyond our traditional approach to include the Social Media tools available. Joyce has put together a survey to determine the use and interest in Social Media by our members and those interested in AVSA. You are also invited to participate. You can use the following link to go and complete the survey. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AVM2013>

The third new committee chair is Barbara Burde who accepted the challenge of chairing the Internet



Committee. I am also part of that committee, and I can assure you there is a lot happening so that when you see the new website you will see the benefit of careful planning and organization. I am not yet ready to promise a date for you to see something, but I am excited about our future site.

Your other committees are also busy. Details are being worked out for the Nashville convention. This will be our first convention sponsored by a corporation. The Holtkamps are being very generous in helping us have a convention in Nashville. Members of the Lonestar African Violet Council and the Mid Atlantic African Violet Council will be staffing the working positions, and we appreciate their efforts.

We have received an invitation for 2015, but there is a lot to do before we will know if we can find the proper facilities. We would like to receive invitations for several years out so we can identify facilities and do the planning to make it a successful convention. It has been some time since we visited either coast and we would really enjoy seeing these states again. Keep in mind that a local organization does not have to provide all of the manpower. You will have help from many of the AVSA committees, so please help us reach your area of the country by sponsoring a convention.

I welcome your emails and phone calls. I have been receiving from 30 to 50 emails a day so I may not be able to respond quickly, but I will respond and I value your input. If you call and we don't answer, please leave a message and I will return your call.

Happy Violet Growing!

John



# Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

I have to thank **Neil Lipson** and **Paula Bal** for sharing some of their lovely photos with me. You'll see some of them in this issue of the AVM and others. I also appreciate Neil stepping in to do "people shots" for me at the Austin convention. With AVSA 1st VP **Winston Goretsky** on the dais at most of the meals, I was concerned about not having pictures from those events. Neil came to the rescue and you'll see some of those pictures on pages 30 and 31 in this issue, as "Violets Danced Across Texas."

I think all of you who purchase plants at conventions often wonder how you'll get them all home. On page 21, my friend **Sue Hoffman** asks this question: *Fact or Myth: "I'm flying, so I can't take plants home?"* You will be surprised at some of the great ideas our members have come up with to carry their purchases!

A member, who offered to write a column on African violets Online, contacted me in the summer. **Jennie Lawrence**, an accomplished writer, suggested mentioning interesting articles, tips, and other information found on the Internet, including helpful websites related to African violets. Her first column will be in the Nov/Dec issue of the AVM.

In a "changing of the guard," **Amy Carruth** is now the AVSA Office Manager, as **Jenny Daugereau** leaves us, after nineteen years as an AVSA employee. Amy and I will miss her, as we've all been close friends for decades, and have enjoyed working together very much.

There seem to be a lot of changes these days.



After many years, the typesetter I worked closely with at Becker Printing, **Shirley Jones** decided it was time to retire. Shirley and I became close over the years, and I know she's enjoying her retirement. When she called to tell me the news, she assured me that she had been training someone new for a good while, and the *African Violet Magazine* (and its Editor!) would be in good hands.

How right she was! I recently met **Erin Bass**, our new typesetter, an enthusiastic young lady who I have enjoyed working with and getting to know. She's also very professional and helpful, and we work very well together.

I'm always inclined to report on the extreme heat in our part of Texas. I don't know why, unless it's because I'm tired of watering my flowerbeds! I have discovered that my grandchildren love watering plants, and as they visit often during the summer, I've made sure they get a lot of chances to enjoy themselves. (Okay...sometimes, I do pay them...)

The plants in my office (yes, there are living plants in here, more than there have been in years) are alive and seem to like the sills of my north-facing windows. Almost every plant in those two windows were table favors from AVSA Conventions. Many are either *Sinningias* or *Streps*, along with African violets.

I hope you all had a great summer!

Ruth

# Office Update

By Amy Carruth, AVSA Office Manager

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: [avsa@earthlink.net](mailto:avsa@earthlink.net)

Hi everyone! I hope all of you have enjoyed your summer. It sure is hot down here in Texas! As many of you know, I am now the AVSA Office Manager.

I became the AVSA Office Secretary at the age of 18, and have been part of the AVSA family for over twelve years. I have attended five of our National Conventions and have enjoyed them all.

The show is always beautiful, and it gives me a chance to meet the members that I have spoken with many times on the phone. I look forward to attending our 68<sup>th</sup> convention in Nashville, TN, which will be held May 25 – June 1, 2014, at the Sheraton Music City Hotel.

We have amazing members, and I feel lucky to be a part of such a great organization. I feel that I have grown up here, as well as my two children. They have visited the office since they were babies and still enjoy watering my violets now when they visit. My son, Grant, is starting Kindergarten, and my daughter, Ava, will be four in December. Where does the time go?

I would like to thank the Executive Committee for their support and the faith they have in me. Working closely with Jenny for sometime, I am



excited to take this new role and look forward to serving the society as Jenny did for so many years.

**Affiliates:** Please make sure the office and the website have your current President and contact information listed correctly. You can email any changes to [www.avsa.org](http://www.avsa.org) and to [melsgrice@earthlink.net](mailto:melsgrice@earthlink.net). Renewals for the Affiliate insurance will be mailed mid-November and are due by the end of December. **If**

**your President does not get an insurance renewal, please contact the office ASAP.** I am happy to announce that we will soon be offering a Past President's certificate for our clubs to purchase for their outgoing officers. They will be available on the website soon.



## Coming Events Deadlines

January Issue - November 1

July Issue - May 1

March Issue - January 1

September Issue - July 1

May Issue - March 1

November Issue - September 1



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## *Optimara Rose Quartz*

*Exhibited by: Susan Hapner*

*Hybridizer: Holtkamp*

*Miniature*



## *Rob's Pink Buttercups*

*Exhibited by:*

*Anne Nicholas*

*Hybridized by:*

*R. Robinson*

*Semiminiature*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## *Mary Craig*

*Exhibited by:*

*Ben Haning*

*Hybridized by:*

*Ronn Nadeau*

*Large*



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



# In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

Hybridizer Janet Stromborg contacted me recently regarding some seedlings of a cross of 'Frozen in Time' x 'Painted Desert.' Several of the seedlings, especially ones that showed the ruffled petal edges from 'Frozen in Time' were showing a "puff" of distorted growth about two thirds out from the center of the flowers. Janet was curious as to what was causing the "puff."



After studying Janet's pictures, what appeared to be happening in these seedlings was a distortion in the ability of the petal to expand past a certain point down the length of the petal. The seedlings with the "puff" tended to have the petal tips restricted in size and coming to a relative sharp point. The sharp transition between the normal centers and the restricted tips was causing a growth distortion, producing the "puff". Another way of looking at this is that the petal was changed in growth rate as it expanded from the center to the tip and a "ripple" or "puff" was being produced in the petal's texture.

Janet thinks the "puff" adds some interesting texture to the flowers and plans on further hybridizing with the trait. As a hobbyist hybridizer, she's not under any commercial drive to produce plants and can follow her curiosity when something unusual shows up in her seedlings. That's always been part of the value of the hobbyist hybridizer. They tend to find some of the more interesting traits or mutations in their plants.

**Q: I'd like to try my hand at hybridizing. Should I start with noids (short for "no ID" plants) or stay with named cultivars?**

A: I'm glad you are going to try hybridizing. The contributions of our hobbyist hybridizers are very important. It takes time to get your results once you make a cross because the seed pods take 4-6 months to mature and the seedlings can take

up to a 6 -12 months to reach blooming size. Because of the average of about a year to get your results, choosing your parents can be one of your most important steps.

If you just want to try hybridizing for the experience and have no real intention of registering the seedlings, go ahead and use noids. Sometimes you can find a spontaneous seed pod on a plant that you can grow to maturity

and plant out the seeds if you just want the experience of growing an African violet from seed.

If you have any goal of possible getting seedlings that are improvements on the parents that would be worthy of registration, I'd suggest staying with named cultivars. You are more likely to get some good seedlings with named cultivars and registration is much easier if you know the cultivar names of both the pollen and seed parent.

In any event, enjoy your hybridizing experiments. There is something "special" about seeing your first seeds germinate, potting up your first seedlings and waiting with baited breath for your first blooms.

**Q: Can you use patented plants in hybridizing?**

A: My understanding is that the patent only applies to asexual or vegetative reproduction of the plant. That is, royalties should be paid to the patent owner if you reproduce the plant by leaf cuttings or stem tip cuttings. Patent rights do not extend to sexual reproduction. You can use patented plants in your hybridizing efforts if you wish to do so.

**Q: I've tried hybridizing on plants from one of the large commercial growers, but I never seem to be able to get seed pods to set. Is there a possibility that these plants are triploids or tetraploids that is prevent seed set?**

A: I would be surprised if any of the large commercial growers are handling triploid or tetraploid plants in their stock. The triploid or tetraploid plants I know of have a reputation of being slow growers and having brittle leaf petioles that snap easily. These are not traits that commercial growers would value. In fact, they usually select for plants that reproduce rapidly under their growing conditions. They also want plants that can arrive intact and looking great so selection has been for very flexible leaf petioles. Triploids or tetraploids would not seem to be a good investment for the large commercial growers.

What I suspect is your problem with seed set is your environmental conditions. The large commercial growers tend to raise their plants in greenhouses where the temperature and humidity is often much higher than in our homes. They breed their plants under these same conditions, so their selection process has probably favored seed set under greenhouse conditions rather than home conditions. Try growing your plants under humidity domes at slightly higher temperatures for a few weeks then try to pollinate them again. I think you'll have much better success under these conditions.



## AVSA BOOSTER FUND

**Shirley Berger** • 2822 S. Mainsail Dr. • Avon Park, FL 33525-6032  
Contributions from period of May 1 - June 30, 2013



### Fantasy

Dixie African Violet Society  
Janet Riemer, Pennington, NJ  
*Life Member donation*



### Geneva

Marge Farand, Ann Arbor, MI



### Multicolor

African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa, OK  
First Nighter African Violet Society of Dallas, TX  
Janet Riemer, Pennington, NJ  
*In memory of Gerry Brenner (104 years old) and Judith Olsen*  
Wisconsin Council of African Violet Clubs  
Wisconsin Council of African Violet Clubs



### Two-tone

African Violet Society of Philadelphia, PA  
*In lieu of speaker's fee for Susan Arnao*  
Beverly's Violets, Beverly Hendricks, Anchorage, AK  
Paula Davis, Little Elm, TX  
*In honor of Janice Madlock*

Columbus African Violet Society, Ohio  
Yvonne Hutcheon, Princeton, NJ

*In memory of Geraldine Brenner*

Donna Mosher, Grove City, Ohio  
Judy Owens, Jamesburg, NJ

*In memory of Gerry Brenner*

Union County Chapter African Violet Society, NJ

*In memory of Gerry Brenner (a member since the early 1960's)*



### Thumbprint

Sheri Affolder, Ypsilanti, MI  
Jeri Anderson, Tucson, AZ  
Susan E Arnao, Mount Laurel, NJ  
First African Violet Society of Spartanburg, SC  
Nancy Loeb, de Leon, TX  
Long Island AVS, NY  
Carol Lovelady, Cedaredge, CO  
Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA  
Veronica Novotney, Mentor, OH  
John L Patterson, Hagerstown, MD  
Betty Tillman, Fort Worth, TX  
Mary L Vasconcelles, Springfield, IL  
Michael Youngs, Sun Prairie, WI  
*In memory of Ruth G. Olsen*

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS: \$1755.50**



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## *Kohleria hirsute USBRG 96-163*

*Exhibited by: Beverly Powers*

# A Family Portrait

By Georgene Albrecht

101 Oak Heights Drive • Oakdale, PA 15071

Email: [georgena@verizon.net](mailto:georgena@verizon.net)

## *Alsobia punctata*

This ornate plant has been in my collection for almost forty years. Both *Alsobia punctata* and *A. dianthiflora* have wonderful, fringed blooms. They are not long-lasting, but there are usually several on each peduncle. Mine have always bloomed summer into fall. My *A. punctata* grows an upright woody stem and *A. dianthiflora* has a more compact, spreading growth habit which produces stolens. These were once classified as *Episcia*.

*Gesneriads*, publication of the Gesneriad Society, featured "The Genus *Alsobia*" in the first-quarter issue in 2010. Blooms come to the end of new terminal growth. There are several outstanding hybrids, *A. 'San Miguel'* and *'Cygnet,'* are two. Growth habit is considered succulent herb and often epiphytic. They grow in the forests of Southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize.

My potting soil is a light, soilless Cornell mix, with one-third fine-grade orchid bark added. Always soak bark for twenty-four hours before mixing.



Foliage is a velvety luscious green. If lower leaves start to yellow, the plant needs more fertilizer or light. They need double the light exposure African violets do, and they are placed just a few inches from the fluorescent tubes that burn twelve-hours a day. *Do not fertilize if temperatures are under 70 degrees.*

Cuttings root easily when placed in damp sphagnum moss and covered. Make

sure there is no moisture on the foliage. A rooting hormone has *never* helped. Seeds set easily and produce abundantly. Remove them to dry on a paper towel when they crack in the center. If they have stolens, just pin them down on the soil surface to root. Tip growth can be cut within an inch of stem, and roots will emerge where the leaf nodes were.

They do not like to be over-fertilized. A high-phosphorus formula is great in late spring. Leach the soil with tepid water about once a month.



Photo Credit: Georgene Albrecht

# Question Box

By Ralph Robinson

P.O. Box 9 • Naples, NY 14512

Email: robsviolet@aol.com

As is always the case, we are far too busy to reply to mail (or e-mail), though we do read all of it. Should you want a personal reply, we are more than willing to answer phone calls made during our normal business hours (12-5 pm EST), since we can work and talk at the same time. For those with access to the Internet, we can be reached at <[comments@violetbarn.com](mailto:comments@violetbarn.com)> or via our web-site at <[www.violetbarn.com](http://www.violetbarn.com)>, or via our Facebook page. The web-site also contains a wealth of information (and answers to many of your questions).



**Question:** *I have two violets, 'Happy Harold' and 'Rob's Cotton Ball.' My question is: Why do violet leaves sometimes turn so they are sitting back to back? 'Happy Harold' started it. His older, mature leaves on the far outside decided to turn back to back in pairs until all the outer leaves were paired up that way. Now they are all flat again as usual. 'Rob's Cotton Ball' seems to want to do this as well. Is this just "something they do" or is it a message that I need to do something?*

**Answer:** Not entirely sure what you mean by "back to back." As a rule, violet leaves will want to grow flat unless conditions encourage them otherwise. If there is an excess of leaves, it may be just that the nearby leaves are pushing or guiding them in this direction. Most violets don't need more than 4-5 rows of leaves to look and grow well (see the question and answer below). Also, be sure that there aren't any large suckers or extra crowns-your violets should have only one, central, growing point (trailers and many *Saintpaulia* species are an exception).

If you are growing in a window, this may also explain leaves not laying flat, since they will always tend to want to face the light and will bend or turn to do so, which may lead to what you are seeing. Be sure to regularly turn, or rotate, your plants to minimize this. This is one great advantage of ar-

tificial light, since we can place it directly above the plants and the leaves can get full light while laying flat.

Of course, genetics can be an explanation as well, though this growth habit has not been typical of either of these varieties for us. Though it doesn't seem to be the case here, on rare occasions, adjoining leaves can develop "fused" together - i.e. a thicker stem with "two heads." A few varieties seem more prone to this, and also seem more likely to sucker and/or develop multiple crowns. "Bustle"-backed leaves are an example of a characteristic that some hybridizers have bred into certain varieties. These varieties have leaves with small (partial) second leaf that appears to be growing on the backside of each leaf. Though unusual, this type of foliage can be more difficult to grow (since it doesn't lay flat and tends to crowd) and, as a consequence, aren't widely commercially grown.

**Question:** *I have a question about African violets that I have been growing for years. How many rows of leaves should a standard violet have? I have seen some in a show that have about ten rows of leaves-long petioles hanging down. I was under the impression that they should have only three or four rows.*

**Answer:** Unless you are growing for exhibition, three or four rows of leaves are generally sufficient. African violets generally produce one bloom per leaf, and usually only from the new growth. This means that only the first few rows of leaves will produce blooms, anyway. Even on show plants, the bloom you see is only from the first few rows of leaves, though each bloom stalk may have a large number of blooms. For these plants, the primary advantage of the additional leaves is in making them look larger and more impressive.

To grow violets with so many leaves, on long petioles, it is usually necessary to use leaf supports or "rings." These are flat, plastic, rings that are



placed around the pot, and beneath the lowest row of leaves, to support the outer rows of leaves. By keeping the leaves flat (not allowing them to droop from their weight), they receive better light and allow the plant to grow even bigger and stronger. Exhibitors will also regularly disbud these plants for many months, so the plant's energy goes into growing foliage. Not only will there be more leaves, but the leaves will generally be larger and thicker stemmed. Once allowed to bloom, this very "developed" plant puts that much more energy into flower production, resulting in higher than usual bloom count. If all goes well, you have plants like what you've seen winning awards at the shows. Of course, if you're not growing for show, there's no need to do any of this. You may not have the space, or the desire to be without flowers for long periods of time.

**Question:** *I've never been disappointed with any violet I have received from you, but I just repotted one of my semiminis, 'Rob's Squeeze Toy,' and suddenly the three leaves in the middle have turned yellow. I was very careful not to get water on it. Is this crown rot, or did I let it get too dry? If so, is there any way of getting rid of it? My three other minis are going great post repotting and blooming like crazy!*

**Answer:** Given that you're not the first to ask (not even close), this is not a silly question, though it may seem that way, in hindsight. This particular variety has "crown" variegation. The leaves should be yellow, especially on the new growth. Since the appearance of the yellow leaves was a surprise, we'll guess that when you received this plant, all its leaves were green. This is not unusual for many varieties with crown variegation.

The amount of variegation is highly dependent upon age and, especially, temperature. Variegation is greatest when temperatures are lower, closer to 65°F to 70°F rather than 80°F. Lower nighttime temperatures seem to be more critical than daytime. For example, you can get good variegation even with warm daytime temps so long as you have a period of coolness at night. Some varieties, and 'Rob's Squeeze Toy' is one, only variegate well under these conditions. The plants we ship of this

variety in August tend to be mostly, or all, green, with little variegation.

Age, or the maturity of the plant, also plays a role in the amount, color, and intensity of the variegation. This variety, and others like it, are usually highly variegated when young, and less so as they mature. The color can also change. When very young, leaves can be nearly totally white. As it matures, more green will appear, and variegation can change in color from pink, to yellow, to beige or tan. The amount, color, and intensity of variegation you see will depend upon your specific environment. Repotting can also encourage new, variegated, growth. This is likely what happened for you. If your room temperature is cooler than ours, you may be able to keep this variegation. Personally, we like this type of variegation, and we grow a lot of these types of varieties. Grown well, they can be the most colorful and beautiful of all violets, and the variation can be a virtue.

**Question:** *I have started growing African violets indoors under artificial grow-lights. The plants are watered by a wicking water system. The plants are on a drain cover with their wick coming down into a 2-inch deep lasagna pan. I have one problem though. The water in the tray seems to be getting fouled with a brown algae or something. I was wondering how to keep the water from fouling. Is there a product I could add to the water to keep it clear?*

**Answer:** No watering system is perfect, and this is one of the imperfections one must deal with when wicking. We don't wick many of our plants, but we do have many on matting, which is often (but not always) wet, so algae can be a problem. We use a Physan 20, which you can find sold by vendors listed in this magazine. If you have a "good" garden center, you may also be able to find it sold there. It's a general-purpose bactericide, viricide, fungicide, and algacide, and is relatively easy and safe to use (as always, read the label and follow the instructions). It has many properties of a good, disinfectant soap. We add about 1/4 tsp. to a gallon of water and use it once per month, between washings of our mats.

Because algae needs both light and water to



grow, you can also take other steps to minimize this problem. First, you needn't keep the reservoir (your pan) full of water all of the time. On occasion, let the reservoir, and your plant's soil, go dry. It's good to let your plants wiggle their "toes" and "breathe" a bit. Though we mat-water many of our plants, we let the mats dry between watering. This helps keep the algae from getting too established. Since algae grows most in bright light, use dark-colored reservoirs (or mats) and, otherwise, limit the amount of light reaching the water.

**Question:** *Can I root violet leaves using rooting powder?*

**Answer:** You can, but we don't recommend it. African violets are soft-tissue plants, and leaf cuttings are generally easy enough to root without it. Rooting powders (hormones) are best used on woodier, harder to root, cuttings. If you do choose to use a rooting powder, use it very sparingly, since the soft tissue of a violet petiole can easily be burned if too much is used.

## Horny Toad at the Austin Convention

By Sue Hoffman

There have been some unique activities at AVSA conventions over the years. However, this one in Austin ranks among the most unusual.

Friday night, a river cruise was planned so we could see 1.5 million bats ascend from the Congress Avenue bridge in downtown Austin. We loaded our motor coach buses at the hotel and proceeded to MOPAC, Highway Loop 1, (named after the Missouri Pacific railway that it was built alongside). Lo and behold, it was rush hour. We began a game of "hurry up and wait, bumper to bumper and slow, very slow."

With that kind of traffic, what is there to do but look out the window? Before too long, a white pick-up truck towing an open trailer came into view on the right side of our bus. It was an interesting conglomeration. The truck bed was filled with sheet metal sculptures, and the trailer was filled to the brim with metal yard ornaments and signs. You couldn't miss it.



*Our tour guide, AVSA member,  
Glenda Selph-Williams.*

This picture was taken as we unloaded back at the hotel.

The next thing I knew, someone in the front yelled, "Oh, that's really cool! I wonder if it's for sale." They pulled the bus window open and started waving at the pick-up driver. "Is that horny toad for sale?" It only took a second for the pick-up driver to catch on. He came back, "Yeah, \$35." That's when our bus driver got involved. She yelled to him, "Too much! Come on." Like clockwork, the fellow yelled back, "Okay, \$27!"

At that point, the woman in front pulled out a \$20 bill and waved it out the window. I could see from my seat as the pick-up driver talked to his passenger, who in turn jumped out, loosened the bungee cords and lifted the horny toad sculpture from the truck. *Remember, we're in bumper to bumper traffic on the expressway!* He dashes in front of the pick-up over to the bus. Meanwhile, our bus driver opened the door and the exchange took place. In an instant, we had the horny toad, and they were \$20 richer. What a memory! What a deal! You should attend an AVSA convention, and possibly you'll get to experience "life in the fast lane"!

*(Editor's Note: Horny Toads, also known as the Horned Toad and Horned Frog, are actually lizards. The most widely distributed of the US species is the Texas Horned Lizard (P. cornutum). They are "wait and see" predators, primarily dining on ants. And, they really have horns made of bone.)*



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## *S. 8 clone Cha Simba*

*Exhibited by: B.J. Ohme*

## pH Meters – The Acid Test

### pH Testing on the Cheap

This was a fun article for me. Playing with different meters is an electrical engineer's dream. All those blinking lights and LCDs made it a ball. However, this article was done because there was too little information out there for getting the correct, accurate pH of soil, so I put in the time to dig out the interesting points that have not been published. I tested meters and strips to compare results, but with an emphasis on keeping the cost REALLY low, so everyone could do it. As you will see, there is no reason to spend a lot of money for accurate results.

For pH testing, you probably want to test either water, soil, or both. This article will compare three different meters, test strips, and color solution pH tests. The three meters are:

**Oakton pH2 +/- 0.1 pH: \$52 from Amazon**

**Hanna HI99104 pH tester +/- 0.02 pH: \$33 from Amazon**

**ATC pH meter: \$11 from eBay (yellow and black)**

To start, you need calibrating solution for all the meters. This is a must. It is not expensive, and most of them are accurate to 0.01pH. Calibrating the meters is much easier than the meters years ago, and it is a one button setting. Because we are only concerned with a pH reading between 6.5 and 6.8, you only need calibration with the 4.0 and the 7.0 solutions. There's really no need to buy the 10.0 as nothing in African violets will even read that high. Make sure that, in between readings and when you're done, you clean the probe gently with distilled or deionized water. The old meters used to require keeping the probe in a cap with some distilled water, but the newer probes can be



rejuvenated by soaking them in the 4.0 calibrating solution. It is recommended with today's meters that you DO NOT store the probe in distilled water, but in 4.0 solution. This will extend the life of the probe substantially.

Now, it's important to mention that calibrating solution is not the same as buffering solution. You could accidentally buy a pH 7.0 buffering solution instead of calibrating solution, so be careful. The calibrating solution can be reused over and over, and has about a 2-year shelf life. This is the only requirement for accurate testing, and it should be discarded after the shelf life. You'll get inaccurate readings if the solution goes bad, even if you have a \$1,000 meter.

This is the method that I described in the Water Quality article I did earlier this year in AVM, and I will give it again. The "professional" method is to get 10 grams of soil, let it dry, mix it with 10 ml of distilled water, let it sit for 30 minutes, and then test it with the pH meter. This is called the 1 to 1 method. You can use more or less as long as it is 1:1. If you just take some soil and mix it with a non-measured amount of distilled water, you could get slightly different results, as too much water will bring the pH reading closer to the water's pH, than to the soil's pH.

Also, remember that you will not get accurate readings if you mix the soil and do not allow the pH to stabilize if you added dolomite lime to the mixture. It takes a few weeks for the dolomite to assimilate into the mixture, and the reading you take immediately might be high. You should spray some water on soil that you mix yourself to allow any buffering agents to start working. Also, when they say to wait 30 minutes, they mean exactly 30 minutes, as the pH can drift slightly.

I will take a moment here to mention which

kind of dolomite lime to use. I try to use the large granule type, not the finely ground up type. The large granules release the lime over time, instead of quickly as the fine type will. This release more closely matches the acidic rise of the sphagnum moss, so the two reactions cancel each other out as time goes by. To determine whether the dolomite is the right kind, recheck the soil after a few months to determine if the pH has gone up or down. If it has dropped by a lot, choose a large granule dolomite.

Now, suppose you are trying to determine how much dolomite to add to your soil mix to get it to 6.5 to 6.8 range and not wait a month for the readings? Try this. Make up the mix. Test the pH before you add the dolomite and write it down. Then add 2 tsp. of dolomite per 100 oz. of mix, by volume. Wait a few weeks, test the pH again, and write that number down. If your starting pH was, let's say 5.8, and the dolomite brought it up to 6.4, you can roughly say that the 2 tsp. raised the pH by 0.6, or about 0.3 per tsp. Then add one more tsp., and that will get it to roughly where you want it. Test again, to be sure.

### The Meters

All three meters were the glass bulb type. Another type of probe has a pH chip made from semiconductors and is called ISFET, which stands for ion-selective field effect transistor. The ISFET is more rugged; however, most of the meters on the market are the glass bulb type. Both the ISFET and the glass bulb probe have to be replaced when they go bad. The manufacturers say they last about two years, but they don't really explain to you what happens when the probes go bad. It's very easy to tell. When the meters don't calibrate to the 4.0 or 7.0 reading, then the probe is bad. You can rejuvenate many bad probes by soaking the tip in the 4.0 calibration solution and, if you can get it to calibrate, you're good to go. If the readings move around, then your problem is either the probe or the batteries. Don't toss it out after two years unless you try the soaking 4.0 trick first. Also, make sure the batteries are fresh. By the way, the ISFET probe actually does have a tiny gelatin "bubble" that is used in measuring the pH, and this

bubble does dry out, which explains the 2-year life.

A really good value meter is the Oakton EcoTestr pH2, which costs about \$52 on Amazon. The EcoTestr pH2 is what's called a single junction probe and the accuracy is  $\pm 0.1$  pH, which means if the reading on the meter is 7.0, it can actually be between 6.9 and 7.1. However, at Oakton they did tell me if you calibrate it right before the reading, the accuracy is even better. I do recommend doing this, so this gives you a good reading for a cheap price. The EcoTestr pH2 is a top seller with high recommendations on Amazon, so I would lean towards it.

Also tested in this study, by my friend Paula Bal, was the Hanna HI99104 pH tester. Paula stated that the meter gave good results, and my readings verify this; however, she did state that she had to replace the probe every 6-12 months. The probe is about \$15.

The third meter tested was the \$11 ATC meter, yellow and black, sold on eBay, which is similar to the Neewer New Mini pH meter pH-009 and to the BestDeal USA pH-009, both on Amazon. This is a low-end meter, but fully functional and suitable for AV soil testing. One caveat on this meter is that it only has one calibration point: 7.0. However, with that being the range in which we are testing, this is not a major problem. If we were testing very low and high pH, I would not recommend it. The meter comes with a jeweler's screwdriver to make adjustments.

**The last pH testing method was with pH strips, which are calibrated to 0.25 pH using pH Ion strips. Jeannie Myers from California was nice enough to test some soil and send me the samples. When I spoke to the company, they said it was designed for saliva and urine and was not approved for plants; however, liquid is liquid. Unfortunately, the pH of the soil I tested as a slurry using strips was way off, about 1.0 pH too low. The API strips were a little better, but were still 0.5 too low. The API pH test with the color liquid was even better at only 0.2 too low. If you decide to extract the liquid off of the slurry to test it, be sure not to use any filter paper, or a coffee filter, as it will throw off the readings. Use a strainer instead, like one used in a kitchen.**

## Extending the Life of the Meter

You can extend the life of any glass bulb pH meter by keeping the electrode in the 4.0 calibration fluid all the time. You don't have to do this; however, it can double the life of the probe.

Also, you can get more accurate readings if you clean off the glass bulb with a Q-tip and alcohol. Pick out any pieces of dirt that usually get wedged in between the bulb and the plastic housing, and do this carefully, as the glass is micro-thin.

## Solution for pH Soil Stability

One easy solution is to add some pH 6.5 buffering solution by API Products. This was designed for aquariums and is apparently safe for African Violets. It causes problems for aquarium plants, like increased algae, as it is phosphorus based. However, as long as you don't use it with a bloom booster, like 12-36-12, it should help regulate the soil pH for violets. API also has a pH up and pH down which is safe for plants and violets. I am going to calculate the amount of phosphorus in the 6.5 pH buffer to see if it throws off the fertilizer's calculations in a future article. API products can be purchased at any pet store or PetSmart.

Another good company is Atlas Scientific, which makes one of the best pH calibrating solutions out there, being accurate to 0.01pH. They too, make a pH up and pH down solution that is compatible with African Violets. They are at:

[www.atlas-scientific.com](http://www.atlas-scientific.com)

## The Results

The results for all the testing on my own personal soil mix were as follows:

Oakton PH27.5  
Hanna HI991047.3  
ATC eBay meter 7.3  
API pH strips 7.0  
pH test - color 7.2 (Martell's Freshwater  
Aquarium pH tester and API's tester)

It turns out that all three meters were within 0.2pH, regardless of price. The Oakton got very good reviews on Amazon with a rating of 4 stars out of 5. The Hanna got 3.1 stars out of 5. Paula

does not like the short life of the probes for the Hanna, and it is interesting to note that people would not know this about the Hanna unless they owned it for over six months. The initial reviews on Amazon would probably be worse if the reviews were done six months later. Keep in mind that Paula did her testing under strict conditions, but at her location, not mine. I was able to test the Oakton and the eBay meter at the same moment on the same slurry mixture. This resulted in fewer variables.

My recommendation on what to buy? Probably the Oakton PH2. Given that the probe may realistically last perhaps three or four years with proper care, you would pay much less over time, than buying a really good meter with a replacement probe costing much more than the \$50 Oakton purchase price. It's cheaper to throw away the Oakton and buy a new one. Also, expect the new pH meters to improve even more.

## Variables in Testing

In this test, there are many variables to minimize. They are: how clean the containers are; proper sampling of the soil to get a homogeneous mixture; timing the slurry testing to exactly 30 minutes; doing the test at room temperature; battery freshness; a very clean probe; fresh calibrating solution, and the distilled water, to name a few.

## Final Comments

The pH meters of today are just plain wonderful. They don't need the maintenance that the old meters did, and calibration is a breeze.

I would like to thank Jeannie Myers and Paula Bal for their hard work in helping me in this article. Paula did some exhaustive testing, and I can depend on her to give me the right results consistently. I also want to thank Dr. Ronn Nadeau for his advice to me on "reduce the number of variables." Good advice, Ronn.

One surprise was that the fresh soil mix was 7.5 while the six-month soil out of the pot was 6.5, so the pH test can indicate when to change your soil. In reality, I would have better growing plants if it stayed in the 6.5 to 6.8 range all the time, by using pH Up and pH down, when needed.

This analysis did take a lot of time, and many wondered why I spent so much energy on doing this correctly. The reason is that I'm mad about violets. But after all, aren't we all?

Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant and vice-president of the African Violet Society of Springfield. He can be reached by emailing him at [ndlipson@gmail.com](mailto:ndlipson@gmail.com) or calling 610-356-6183 after 1pm Eastern time. He will return your call.

## Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

Janet Riemer

256 Pennington-Harbourton Rd. • Pennington, NJ 08534

May 1 – June 30, 2013 • Total this period: \$93.00

### Two-tone

Jo Ellen Bowden

Quentin C. Schlieder, Jr.

### Thumbprint

Veronica Novotney

Patricia Miklica

Sheri Affolder

Nancy Loeb



## BOYCE EDENS RESEARCH FUND

Marlene J Buck • 17235 N. 106th Avenue • Sun City, AZ 85373-1958

Donations received from: April 1, 2013 – May 31, 2013

Total = \$ 193.50



### Multicolor

Wisconsin Council of African Violet Clubs,  
Madison, WI



### Two-Tone

Oshkosh Violet Society, Oshkosh, OH  
Susan E Joy, Pickerington, OH



### Thumbprint

Sheri Affolder, Ypsilanti, MI

African Violet Club of Morris County, NJ

*In lieu of judges expenses to our show  
judges Linda Lopresti & Elizabeth Behnke*

Linda L Anderson, Livonia, MI

Ellen Brooke, Boyertown, PA

Karen Derenia, Cloverdale, CA

First AVS of Spartanburg, Spartanburg, SC

Carol Lovelady, Cedaredge, CO

Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA

Veronica Novotney, Mentor, OH





*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## *Mac's Northern Lights*

*Exhibited by: Bill Price*

*Hybridizer: G. MacDonald*

# Fact or Myth: "I'm flying, so I can't take plants home?"

By Sue Hoffman

You'd be *amazed* how easy it is to prove this is a MYTH.

At the Austin, TX airport, my sister and I ran into the Minnesota sisters, Carol Semrau and Gail Podany, lugging their own sizeable stash of African violets. They toted sturdy, elaborately-constructed carrying cases; each included a heavy-duty luggage handle and straps for added security.



**Unopened Container**



**Opened Container**

The Connecticut crew went by, and we noticed each person escorting an individual African violet travel case. Charlene Boyce uses a converted cat carrier with multi-level storage. Of course, people are always curious to see what cute pet she has in the case. Roger Wheeler has a special rolling suitcase, and Vivian Hiltz had a perfect, large bright yellow vinyl carry-on tote bag. They had big smiles and seemed to relish their success at the Austin convention. Call it what you will, they looked like three African violet musketeers hauling their loot back home.

Consider difficulty in travel and transporting plants; my sister, Carol Burris, must negotiate many hurdles. She not only takes a cab or shuttle to the airport, but also has the airplane flight(s) to Phoenix after which she must catch a three-hour shuttle bus from the airport to Flagstaff, Arizona. During the ride "up the hill" her plants



**Roger Wheeler  
CT Crew**

must acclimate to life and oxygen at 7,000 ft. elevation and extremely low humidity. Whew! Yes, they are amazing plants! Carol uses a duffel bag carry-on with side and end pockets.



**My sister Carol's bag**

Over the years, I have learned to carry an ample collection (nice way of saying "way too many") plants when flying. Yes, some cardboard boxes are the exact size for

under airplane seats. Duct tape or packing tape loosely wrapped around the box to create a handle makes an ideal container. It is a good idea to check your plane. I have run into a metal box on the floor under some aisle seats. Then it's necessary to use the overhead compartment.

This year my "magic carry-on" was a large IZOD tote bag. Imagine function and style in the same bag – only \$24.95 from TJMaxx. The faux leather bottom and handles, plus straps to tighten and secure the top opening were an added bonus. A cardboard tray fit the bottom perfectly and added extra stability to the base. An inside zippered compartment held all my leaves.

Due to weather, flights were delayed in Baltimore. Although we started our day at 9:30 am, I didn't arrive home to Virginia Beach, VA, until midnight. When I unpacked my bag the next day, my plants looked A-OK. I'm telling secrets...

My take-home bounty consisted of 11 mini/semis; 5 trailers; 17 standards; 1 strep; 14 mixed African violet leaves; 5 strep leaves, plus 1 fluffy ruffles fern, and 1 *Selaginella*. Glad to share the tips. Please don't tell my husband.

# Building Membership Is As Easy As One-Two-Three

By Joyce Stork

## One: Teach

People come to learn. Any time anyone states that they love violets but they have trouble with them, you have an opening to teach. Don't pass it up. You don't have to give a class, but try to answer their questions kindly and simply.

After answering a question, point them to an AVSA-related resource where they would find future help. Here are some possibilities:

- A related article in *African Violet Magazine*.
- Your local club or a club publication.
- The AVSA website or an AVSA culture folder or one of the many products that AVSA sells to help growers enjoy their violets more.
- An online African violet group like African Violet Nerds or African Violet and Gesneriad (both on Facebook), or one of the online AVSA affiliate clubs like Violet Reflections or African Violet Connection.
- One of the internet blog sites such as *Three Oak Violets* by Amy Allison, or *African Violet Growing Tips & Tricks from Hoover Hybrids* by Darryl Hoover.
- A podcast like *All About African Violets* by Adrienne "Annie" Rieck
- An AVSA commercial website, such as Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses, The Violet Barn, Optimara Greenhouses, Bluebird Greenhouses, etc. Many of these AVSA commercial growers are great boosters of AVSA, and many new members come to AVSA through their efforts.

Whatever you do, make sure that anyone you teach about African violets knows that they have a way to learn more about African violets, and try to make sure they also learn more about AVSA.

## Two: Be a Friend

People come to learn, but they stay because they make friends. Learn their name. Offer to help with repotting. Gift them with a plant or leaves. Invite them to join your club or to join AVSA. Do what seems natural and what is comfortable. Just don't ignore people who want to be a part of your violet circle.

Are you on Facebook? It's a great place to build friendships without feeling awkward. The "Like" button is a great tool for encouraging a beginner. Respond to their questions (see above) and get to know them. When you have an opportunity to meet that Facebook friend in person, it will be truly exciting.

Once you're friends, continue to teach, and soon your friend will be teaching you too.

## Three: Be Nice

People come to learn, and they stay because they make friends, but if there's a conflict, they go away. It's never good to fight, especially not in a public place like your club newsletter or in social media online. So keep it nice. Don't put your new friends in the middle of an argument or ask them to take sides.

Sometimes it's tempting to gripe about something that isn't perfect in AVSA. Please don't. Talk to the officers, office staff, or the AVSA directors privately, but don't vent in public. It makes everybody feel bad and makes everyone (even experienced members) want to get away from the trouble.

Be nice! Smile and talk about the many great things there are about our hobby. The teaching and friendship will go on and on. A side benefit? Your club and AVSA will grow.

## One-Two-Three!



# Propagation of African Violets Using a Leaf Cutting

(From the Leaf Propagation Kit, distributed by the Central California AVS)

By Renee Wilson

1.) Chose a healthy leaf from the middle row of leaves and remove it. Do not use an older, outer leaf. The outer leaves are not as vigorous, take longer to put out plantlets, and will not give you optimum results.

2.) Make a 45° cut on the petiole (stem) about 1 to 1 1/2 inch from the leaf base, using a very sharp knife or razor blade. You want to get the cleanest cut possible and avoid crushing or damaging the petiole.

3.) Use a very light and porous rooting medium. This will enable you to keep the leaf petiole uniformly moist. I use a 50/50 mix of Perlite and Vermiculite. Keep this medium moist at all times. If the medium dries out, the new delicate and fine roots will wither and die. Please note: I said keep moist...NOT WET!

\*\*\*The reason I do not use regular potting soil to start leaves is because when the little leaves are brand new and very small, sometimes the regular potting soil is too heavy for them to push their way through easily.\*\*\*

4.) I use a plastic 3 ounce Solo cup that has 3 or 4 holes poked in the bottom. **MAKE SURE** you put the name of the *mother plant* on the cup with a Sharpie, or other permanent marker, so you can identify your leaf! This is very important! It takes a long time for plants to grow from leaf to blooming plant, and if you lose the mother plant, you won't have anything to compare the bloom to later. You don't want to go to all this trouble and then not be able to identify your plant when it is mature.

5.) Fill the cup to about 1/4 inch from the top with the Perlite/Vermiculite mixture.

6.) Place the petiole of the cut leaf into the Perlite/Vermiculite mixture leaving about 1/2 inch from the surface of the medium to the base of the leaf. Set the cup into a saucer of water until the perlite/vermiculite mixture is wet. This will take about 10-30 seconds.

7.) Put your leaf under the same lights as the rest of your plants, and keep it moist. If you grow under artificial light, keep it about 12" under the lights. If you grow in natural light, make sure it is in very good light, away from drafts and colder windows.

8.) You will notice tiny little leaves pushing their way up through the Perlite/ Vermiculite mixture in six to twelve weeks. Let them grow until the leaves are about the size of a dime, when they are ready to transplant into bigger pots and regular potting soil. You will very often get at least two or three strong little plantlets from each leaf.

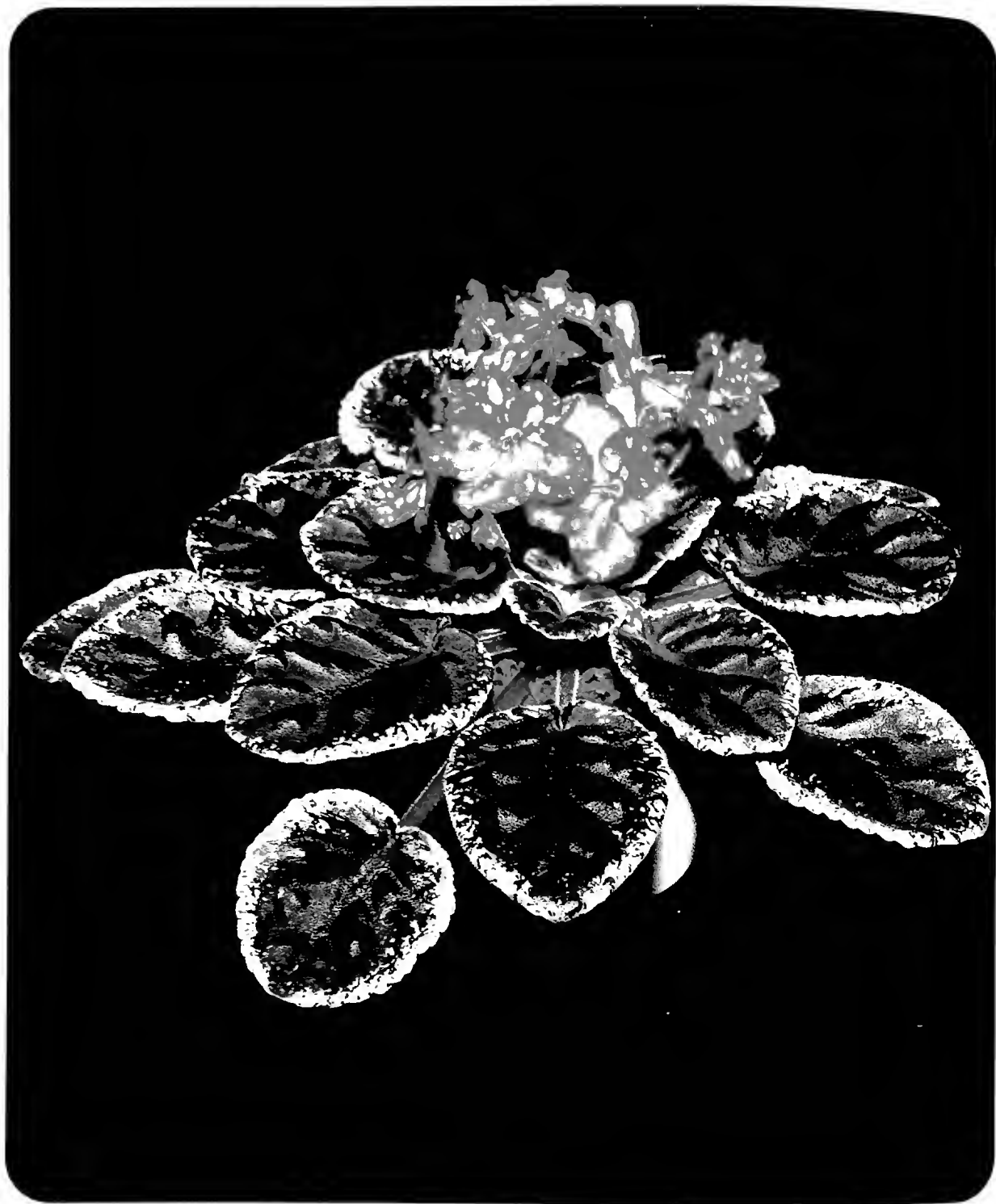
Please remember, this is how I start my leaves and it has worked very well for me. Everyone has different methods so my best advice is to experiment, ask questions of other growers, read the articles relating to leaf propagation in the *African Violet Magazine*, and find the way that works best for you and your growing conditions.

**Good Luck!**



## AVSA's Facebook Page

AVSA has its very own **Facebook** page, with over 2,000 friends! Please take a moment to stop by and "like" our page! Be sure to post your club's shows, meetings, awards, or other club and African violet information. Thank you, Ann-Marie Keene, for helping to keep our Facebook page up-to-date!



*Photo Credit: Neil Lipson*

## *Apache Flash*

*Exhibited by: Neil Lipson*

*Hybridized by: J. Munk*

*Standard*



*Photo Credit: Jacquie Eisenhut*

## ***Rob's Bo Peep***

*Exhibited by: Leonard Re*

*Hybridized by: R. Robinson*

*Semiminature*



# Shows and Judges

*Bill Foster, Shows and Judges Committee*

3610 Gray Drive • Mesquite, TX 75150

Email: 1bpfoster@sbcglobal.net

Wow, what a great convention in Austin! Hope you and your violets enjoyed "Dancing Across Texas." Thanks to those who worked so hard to present the "Dance," and to all the exhibitors for making this the largest display in recent years. It is always so nice to visit old friends and make new ones. I depend on all the hugs and handshakes to get me through to the next convention. I can barely care for the many plants I have but would never even consider coming home empty-handed. I am pretty sure all of us suffer from this addiction, affliction, or whatever it is.

Congratulations to these Judges, who, in October, will become MASTER JUDGES. Joanne Martinez and Jean Marie Ross, Florida, Gail and James Graf, Minnesota, Kent Stork, Nebraska, Fay Wagman, New York, and Kevin Degner, Wisconsin. Thanks to all of you for your dedication and hard work.

**Please make the following additions or changes to your Handbook:**

**Page 52** - Under Consideration for Judging Standard African violets, please add - Size: A standard plant should be 9 or more inches in diameter. Under Condition, after "plant not centered," add: plant smaller than 9 inches in diameter.

**Page 53** - under quantity of bloom, change 8" to 9." The reasoning for change is that for several years we have been questioned by members and spectators alike, as to why there were entries in standard classes, there were plants the size of semi-miniatues or less. This change, by adding an inch to the size of a small standard, will take it out of the semiminature range.

Here are some questions discussed at the Judges Breakfast and a few were received later.

**Is the Educational and AVSA Information exhibit judged in an Affiliate show?** Yes. Refer to information on judging on page 75 of the Handbook. Page 87 will show that 6 points for the educational material and 6 points for AVSA information are a part of calculating the score for the SSA or SSAA award, so if these exhibits the Affiliate would lose 12 points.



**Should an Underwater Arrangement lose points if exhibited in a niche?** Not if the schedule states that this class is to be exhibited in a niche. The exhibits should follow the rules stated in the schedule.

**Should 2 transparent containers (one on top of the other) be used in underwater exhibits?** Yes, if the lower is used as a pedestal, and 'no' if the lower container has water and plant material in it.

**Four judges in an Affiliate show signed the collection sheets. Is this right?** No, the panel of three judges, assigned to judge collections are the only ones that should sign the collection score sheets.

**Is it possible to have two judges judge a show?** No, at least a panel of three AVSA judges must judge a show in order for it to be considered as an approved AVSA Standard Show. Unless this rule is adhered to, exhibitors cannot use the ribbons when applying to renew their judges certificate.

**At a recent show, plants with as many as twelve yellow leaves were awarded Best in Class over plants that were smaller, but would have scored higher if point-scored. Two of the judges commented that points should be deducted, but the third judge insisted that "this is the way this plant grows."** The two majority should have insisted on point scoring. Ask for a description for the plant in question. It is very doubtful the description would state that the plant has yellow leaves unless it might be a plant with crown variegation. The reason for three judges on a panel is to avoid domination by one judge. Although it is not always necessary to point score for Best in Class, this should be done if there is a question between two or more plants.

**Please explain "mirror image" designs. What should you see on the back side?** The designs should appear that you are seeing the front design as if were in front of a mirror. The front of the back design should be the image of the back of the front design. The best way to attain this is to set your completed front design in front of a mirror and

copy it for the front of the second design. Hope this isn't too confusing. It works for me!

***More and more 'other gesneriads' are being entered in the show. Is there a concern that they might outnumber African violets at some point?*** A few have expressed concern. So far it has not created a problem. Should it become one, we will deal with it.

***Does an African violet show need to have a certain number of entries to be judged?*** Please refer to page 85 in the Handbook. To receive-

maximum (towards an SSA/SSAA award) the number of entries must equal at least four times the number of members, and at least 50% of the members must exhibit. The show can still be judged, but points would be deducted unless this criteria is met.

More questions will be discussed in the next column. Please remember, the Handbook is not just for Judges, but for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges. If you don't have one, get one! Start saving your pennies for Nashville.



## Membership Dues Increase

By John Carter, AVSA President

At the Annual African Violet Society of America Board of Directors meeting held May 29, 2013 in Austin, Texas, the Board voted to approve a membership dues increase of five dollars for USA members and more for international members. The increase was necessary to keep up with rising costs associated with the publication of the *AVM* and operation of the society. Costs for postage have risen significantly, especially for international members, as has the cost of insurance and utilities.

The last dues increase was approved in 2007. In 2009 the board approved reduction in the size of the magazine to offset increased publication costs. Since that time, our costs have continued to rise just as you have seen your personal expenses rise. The alternative to increasing dues was to reduce the number of issues of the *African Violet Magazine*.

Operation costs are also being cut in the office. The first such reduction was the reduction of the staff announced in the July issue of the *AVM*. We have new Committee Chairs in the areas of Finance, Membership and Internet who are working towards improving benefits, improving

communication, increasing membership as well as retaining members and managing the financial aspects of the society. Donations for the Convention Show Awards, Building and Maintenance, Booster, Boyce Eden's and Tinari funds have reduced significantly due to the economic condition of the country.

We recognize that we may lose some members due to the increase in dues. But we ask you to consider that the increase is only \$1.25 per issue. You are probably paying \$1.25 more per gallon of fuel that you purchase today than you did in 2009. We hope that you will support our continuing efforts to diligently oversee the management of our society.

The new rates effective November 1, 2013 are:

Individual Membership USA \$35.00  
Associate Member USA \$17.50—no magazine  
International Individual, Canada \$40.00  
International Individual, (not Canada) \$60.00  
Library \$35.00

# For Beginners

By Mary S. Schaeffer

Email: [mary@maryschaeffer.com](mailto:mary@maryschaeffer.com)

Blog: [maryschaeffer.tumblr.com](http://maryschaeffer.tumblr.com) • Twitter: [@Africanviolets](https://twitter.com/Africanviolets)

## Repotting and Revitalizing Your Plants: What if I Kill Grandma's Violet?

My daughter-in-law has a violet that belonged to her grandmother, given to her when her grandmother died – over five years ago. It has been in the same pot ever since, and who knows how long before it came into her possession? Every time she asks if I think it should be repotted, and would I help her with it, I cringe.

Truth be told, it's getting a bit of a neck, the pot is too big, and the soil is quite compacted. In theory, this plant should be withering, but in reality it is strong and blooms periodically. I know it is long overdue for repotting and revitalization, but what if I killed it in the process? Would I be relegated forever to the Mother-in-Law from Hell circle?



reason for emphasizing it in a *revitalization project* such as this one is the odds are good that in addition to being leggy, this plant might also be dusty. Just make sure the pot doesn't sit in the water that runs off the plant for more than a minute or two. Once you're satisfied that the plant is clean, knock it out of the pot, and get ready for major surgery. If the plant has been growing in the same pot for many years, it may not come out of the pot easily.

Once you have the plant out, you have two options.

### First Approach

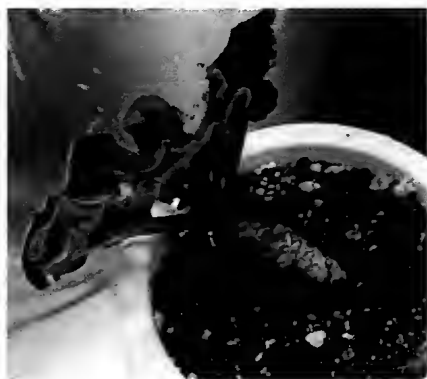
With the violet out of the pot, gently remove as



much of the old soil as you can. Then, cut off the bottom third of the plant. Scrape old roots and hardened stuff off of the stem. I find an old steak knife is good for this. Of course, the blade does not have to be razor sharp. *Figure 4* shows the plant ready for potting, with much of the soil removed and the neck scraped.

When you have the plant ready to be repotted, you'll need to decide whether or not you want to put rooting compound on the stem. This is a matter of personal preference. I don't use it, but know many excellent growers who do.

Next, you'll want to put a little soil in bottom of the pot and then place your plant in the pot. The crown should rest as close to the rim as possible, staving off future neck problems for as long as possible. Then, fill the rest of the pot with fresh potting mix, gently tapping the soil into place. If you mois-



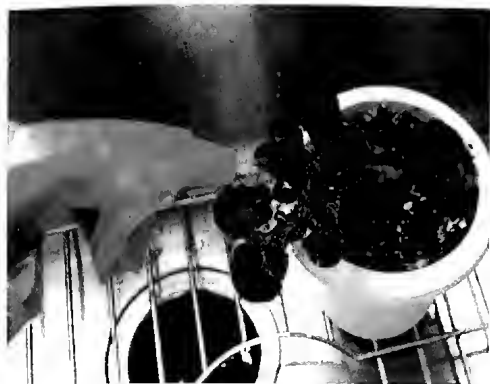
### If It Were My Plant

If this were my plant, I'd take action. *Figure 1* shows one of my plants that sadly was neglected to the point of needing a serious revitalization. I started revitalizing it by gently washing the top of plant, by placing the plant in its pot in the sink, and using warm water to spray all the leaves. *Figure 2* shows the plant being washed at the sink. If you don't have one of these hand sprayers as part of your kitchen set up, you can use a bottle that you might use for misting. *Figure 3* shows the plant being cleansed with a mister.

I periodically wash all my violets this way. The

ten the soil ahead of time, you'll have an easier time when it comes to watering the plant.

Now, it's time to water your plant sparingly. If possible, place the repotted violet in a plastic bag or under a dome for extra humidity to help it adjust. *Figure 5* shows the revitalized plant waiting to be put into a plastic bag. This step isn't crucial with this approach, but it will help the violet recover more quickly. After all, it's just had major surgery. After a few weeks, gradually remove the violet from its protective covering.



### Second Approach

This approach is more drastic and will definitely require a little extra humidity for the plant during the recovery phase. With a clean knife, cut the top of the plant off, leaving an inch or two of the stem. I like to call this approach, "Off with Her Head," for obvious reasons.

Again, gently scrape off old roots and hard stuff off stem. If you want, you can put rooting compound on the stem, although this is not necessary.

Fill a small pot with fresh pre-moistened soil, lightly tamping it down. Then, push the stem into the soil, getting the crown as close to the rim of the pot as possible. You want to eliminate as much of the neck as possible. Water sparingly and place in a plastic bag or under a dome for extra humidity to help the plant adjust. In this scenario, if you don't provide extra humidity, your chances of success are much lower – especially if you live in an area with low humidity.

In three or four weeks, your plant should have sufficient roots to survive without the extra humidity. Gradually remove it from its protective covering and place your newly revitalized violet among your collection.



### Worth the Aggravation?

Most violet lovers would follow one of these approaches to make sure they kept a treasured violet. Not everyone sees it this way. Several years ago, a violet I had given my brother developed quite a neck. When he asked what he should do, I explained as above. After listening to my lengthy explanation, he replied, "Oh, that's too much work. I'll just go to the store and get another one." Somehow, he managed not to roll his eyes.

It should be noted that most good violet growers repot their mature plants at least once a year (and sometimes twice), removing old leaves and some soil. They lower the plant a little at a time into the pot, thus never ending up with "necky" violets. However, some of us are not at all as disciplined as we'd like.

There is a third approach. It just takes a little more time to get a mature plant. Simply take a leaf and start a new plant, composting the old leggy one.

What's the best approach? It depends; it's a personal decision; there is no one best way. It's *whatever works for you* – even if that is leaving it in the same pot for years on end...



# *Violets Danced Across Texas*

*Photos by Neil Lipson*



Debbie McInnes & Alcie Maxwell



Kurt & Belinda Thibedeaux & Penny & Mike Kerker



Neil Lipson & Linda Hall



Roger Wheeler & Charlene Boyce



Mary McFarland & Edna Rourke



Vladimir Kalgin & Glenda Williams

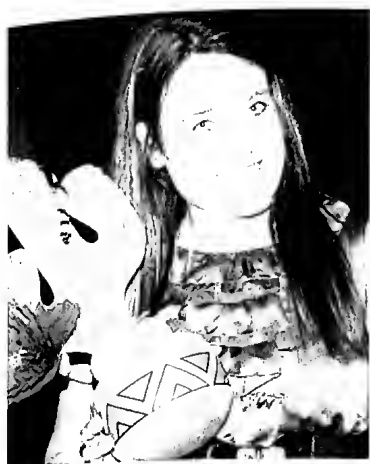


Sue Ramser, Elmer Godeny, Edna Rourke



Anne-Marie Keene, Jenny Daugereau,  
Dave Harris





Amy Carruth,  
AVSA Office Manager



Paula Bal, Kurt Jablonski, Pat Hancock



Terri Post & Barbara Burde



Andrea Worrell



Winston & Laurel Goretsky



Mary Corondan, Marian & Greg Zoller



Paul Sorano & Steve Turner



Yee-Haw!



# Some Thoughts on Growing Petrocosmeas...

By Bill Price

On first sight, these geometrically symmetrical plants are very appealing and make a beautiful addition to one's *Gesneriad* collection. However, although getting them to produce baby plantlets from leaves is about the same as for propagating *Saintpaulia*, growing them to mature blooming plants is a bit more challenging.

The preferred growing conditions for petrocoseas are a little different than for *Saintpaulia*. They do well in slightly lower light, such as on the sides of a two-tube shelf with the same twelve-hour duration. As I will describe below, while in active growth, they like temperatures about the same as violets. I will discuss mix later in this article also. Watering and fertilizer is about the same during their growth period, but they prefer slightly drier conditions overall. Unless

you wish to dedicate an area to them, they do well growing alongside the violets, with the cultural conditions noted below.

I find petrocoseas to be very sensitive to the repotting process. They may sulk, not grow, bloom, or indeed may even die, especially if not potted considering their growing requirements.

Here's what I do:

First of all, I use a very open, porous mix such as 2/3 of my regular *Saintpaulia* mix, and 1/3 perlite.

I first pot babies into 2 1/2" pots and grow them

covered for the first couple weeks. At all transplanting stages, I water very sparingly for a while after, until growth resumes. When the plant has grown to extend over the pot edge by about 1/2" and is still "flat," I gently remove it and check if the roots are well established.

If the plant stays too long in a small pot, and as the foliage extends further over the pot edge, the

plant starts to form a dome shape. Once this occurs, I find it is impossible to pot it up as described below. In order to rejuvenate the plant, several rows of leaves and some mix must be removed, and the plant repotted back into the smaller pot, and *lower* so it can restart growing flat. It is of course

permissible to show Petrocosmeas growing either flat,

domed, or multi-crowned for that matter, but if your goal is to grow larger

plants, then allow some to stay flat.

Then, I will 'mold' pot it up into either a 4" azalea pot, trimmed down to be shallower (if a small growing plant) or into a 5" bulb pan (eg. for larger growers such as *P. minor*, *sericea*, and other large growers). It is often hard to get ones fingers in to firm the mix, so I just use a small dibble or seafood fork that I use slowly and carefully to not damage the rosette. Again, I am very careful not to overwater when I first transplant and until I see evidence of new growth. Usually after a couple weeks, you notice that the plant takes off!



*Petrocosmea minor*

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

While I pot up babies at any time, I try to do re-potting of larger plants from about February to early July. This seems to match the plants normal surge of growth and results in a greater overall success rate.

One must also keep in mind the yearly cycle of these plants. They originate mostly from southern China where they essentially have a warm moist growing period from late spring to early fall, followed by a cool, dry winter. While some species will bloom readily and off and on throughout the year, many do indeed require some period of drier, cooler conditions, but with good humidity. Tim Tuttle has described this very well and has been

successful in producing several interesting hybrids.

Using this up potting technique, some of the larger growing species and hybrids can be moved up from a 5" bulb pan to a ('top cut off') 6" or 7" pan or even into a shallow plastic watering saucer with several holes drilled in it for drainage. Some can eventually achieve diameters of over 12"!

In my experience, when the plants are transplanted earlier in the year and have a good season of growth (2 tubes, watering with dilute fertilizer), then when given a cooler, drier time ( still under lights and with adequate humidity ), they will reward the grower with a huge display of blooms.

.....

## *Red Bandito*

*Exhibited by:*

*Ben Haning*

*Hybridized by:*

*H. Pittman*

*Semiminiature*



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

# Nashville 2014 Convention

## Specific Awards

We wish you a fun and exciting trip to the 2014 AVSA Convention in Nashville, TN, where you will enjoy lots of country charm. Here is the list of Specific Variety and Collection Awards donated so far for the 2014 convention show. The awards that we give are important because they encourage people to show their plants, and they serve as a reward for their hard work. We would especially like to invite those who are members residing in Tennessee and surrounding states to talk with your club members and donate one or two awards for this convention which will be held in your area. All awards will be listed in the convention book. Many thanks go to those members and affiliates who make our awards possible through their donations, and we encourage each of you to consider giving an award.

**A Special Note:** Holtkamp Greenhouses, our 2014 host, is sponsoring a design award for the Nashville show. This design will use an Optimara NeverFloris plant and the Best in Class award will be \$100. Designers, be sure and check the design schedule when it is posted in January 2014, and plan on entering this special class.

To be part of this convention effort, please send your awards (payable to AVSA in U.S. funds) to:

Judith Carter, AVSA Awards Chair  
1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

Email: [AVSAawards@windstream.net](mailto:AVSAawards@windstream.net)

The deadline for your award to be included on the Jan/Feb AVM Awards page is October 15, 2013. Please include an email address or telephone contact.

### Specific Variety Awards

Best Concord - \$100 - Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)

Best Everdina - \$50 - Hans Inpijn (CA)

Best Hans' Pink Surprise - \$50 - Hans Inpijn (CA)

Best Jersey Snow Flakes - \$25 - Robert Kurzynski (NJ)

Best Lonestar Helen Mahr - \$25 - Richard & Anne Nicholas (TX)

Best Lonestar Twilight - \$25 - Richard & Anne Nicholas (TX)

Best Optimara Ontario - \$25 - Michigan State AV Society (MI)

Best Rodeo Country - \$75 - Spring Branch AVC (TX)

Best Ozark Sinningia - \$35 - David Harris (MO)

### Amateur Collection Awards

Best Holtkamp Collection \$300/coin - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)

2nd Best Holtkamp Collection \$200 - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)

3rd Best Holtkamp Collection \$100 - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)

Best Lyon's Greenhouse Collection \$200 - Paul Sorano (NY)

2nd Best Lyon's Greenhouse Collection \$100 - Paul Sorano (NY)

Best Robinson Collection \$200 - Ralph & Olive Ma Robinson (NY)

2nd Best Robinson Collection \$100 - Ralph & Olive Ma Robinson (NY)

Best Russian Hybrid Collection \$300 - Vladimir & Tatiana Kalgin (Moscow, Russia)

2nd Best Russian Hybrid Collection \$200 - Vladimir & Tatiana Kalgin (Moscow, Russia)

3rd Best Russian Hybrid Collection \$100 - Vladimir & Tatiana Kalgin (Moscow, Russia)

### Commercial Collection Awards

Best Holtkamp Collection \$300 - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)

2nd Best Holtkamp Collection \$200 - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)

3rd Best Holtkamp Collection \$100 - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)

This listing has only Specific Variety and Collection Awards. For all current awards, go to [www.AVSA.org](http://www.AVSA.org). A full awards list will appear in the January/February AVM.

Specific variety awards for Nashville have closed. They are now being accepted for the 2015 AVSA Convention.

# Potting Bench Set-up

by Paul Kroll

Potting bench set-up is important. I have a potting bench which is a panel door on legs. Underneath that surface are tubs which hold various sized pots. I can just reach under the bench and grab the pot I need. A narrow shelf above the potting surface holds labels, various sized screens for pots, labeling instruments, etc.

At the center of the bench's surface is an old, worn and discolored dish drainer tray. At the front edge of the table is a hook, on which is hung an old pail. As I work on potting, I can easily brush the discarded soil, etc. right into the pail and empty it periodically.

Just to the side of the bench is my tub of soil and a tub of propagating mix. To the other side is an old ash can into which I toss the soiled pots. This setup makes it easy to work, easy to clean up, and easy to keep clean. If your potting area is set up at all times, it makes things so easy to go there and work. For those whose potting area must be set up and torn down each and every time you want to work, there is a problem! Strive to keep an area set up so that you can go to it even for a short time. I often work on plants for an hour or so and just turn out the light!

From *Chatter*, Publication of the AVS of Canada

## Thank you for a Successful AVSA Convention Auction!

By *Edna Rourke*

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the generous donors and winning bidders who made this year's luncheon auction a success. We couldn't have done it without you!

Special thanks goes to our auctioneer, **Bill Price**, who does such an outstanding job. His ability to entertain us, as well as taking the time to generously donate interesting plant cuttings always makes the auction a very fun and successful event. Our auction staff – **Carol Burris, Bob Clark, Maida Den Oudsten, Elmer Godeny, Laurel and Winston Goretsky, Michi Harper, Sue Hoffman, Dale Martens, Abbey Seymore and Joan Wood**. My sincere thanks to **Ruth Rumsey**, our AVSA Editor, to **Jenny Daugereau** and **Amy Carruth** for their help and support throughout the year, in addition to the recording, collecting, and keeping track of the auction sales. Very special thanks go to **Charlene Boyce** and my husband, **Al**, for their tireless help "behind the scenes" all year long.

To our many generous donors: **Jeri Anderson**,

99 Old Stratford Road, Shelton CT 06484

Email: [Apapillon@aol.com](mailto:Apapillon@aol.com)

**AVSA Commercial members** (salesroom 1 hour and ½ hour early entry), **John Carter, Jan Davidson, Kathy Dickman, Bill Foster, Linda Hall, Ovella Hall, Pat Hancock, Susan Hapner, Dave Harris, Laurene Jones, Vladimir Kalgin, Ann Marie Keene, Dale Martens, Linda Matthews, BJ Ohme of Perfect Petals, Brenda and Mahlen Petry of The Violet Gallery, Claire Potter, Bill Price, Janet Reimer, Annie Rieck, Russell Kirchner of Holtkamp, Catherine Thompson, and Fay Wagman**, a huge thank you for your generous donations!

To all of our successful winning bidders, thanks for your support. Without your enthusiasm and generosity this auction wouldn't have been possible.

Information about next year's auction will appear in upcoming issues of the *African Violet Magazine*. I'm looking forward to seeing you in Nashville at the 2014 Convention!



*Photo Credit: Neil Lipson*

## *Mac's Springtime in Springfield*

*Exhibited by: Peggy Mooney*

*Hybridized by: G. McDonald*

*Semiminiature*

# Two Winning Designs from Jacquie Eisenhut



*Photo Credit: Jacquie Eisenhut*



# Supersize your Gesneriads

*An Interview with Donna Turner at the 2012*

*AVSA/AVSC Joint Convention in Detroit*

By: Sayeh Beheshti (chatter@avsc.ca)

As I was walking through the showroom, a beautiful *Episcia* caught my eye. It was *Episcia* 'Kee Wee' grown in a 10" pot, and had won Best in Class. The leaves were very large with a glorious velvety texture. I noted that Donna Turner was the exhibitor, then continued down the table.

Soon, I spotted another massive plant, this time a *Streptocarpus*. *S.* 'Fleischle Roulette Cherry,' again, grown by Donna Turner. This was a variety that I had grown with some success, but mine had never come anywhere close to the beauty sitting before me. A quick glance down the table revealed even more super-sized *Streptocarpus*, all grown by Donna. I wanted to know more!

Donna graciously spoke with me about her growing techniques, and, in her own words, here is how she grows these beautiful *Gesneriads*.

\*\*\*\*\*

"I started by planting four babies into a ten-inch pot. I planted them a bit towards the center because they would grow and fall over the sides. Since my ten-inch pot wouldn't fit over my regular reservoirs, I built a custom watering system using a pie pan with pebbles to act as a reservoir. I put a few 2.5 inch pots upside down on it and then placed the 10 inch pot on top, dropping the wick down to the bottom pie pan. The pebbles in the pie pan are very useful since they help create the humidity that episcias really like. Another useful tip is to continuously clip extra stolons since that forces the leaves to grow larger.

"With streps it's a bit different. I actually don't let them bloom from the time they are babies. Whenever they want to, I pinch the blooms off. Sometimes I don't even know what the flower looks like on my streps until they're big and I let them come into full buds. I love being surprised when my plants put out their first head of bloom. Seeing what the flowers look like is the best gift in the world!

"My whole process actually starts when the streps are babies. When I separate my babies I say 'the rule of thumb is the size of your thumb,' so when they are as big as my thumb I separate them off the mother leaf. I start all my streps in 5 1/2 oz. plastic cups that I purchase from a restaurant supply store. I cut drain holes in the bottom of each cup. I used to start them in the 3 oz Solo cups, but found that when the streps got a little dry, they toppled easily. The wider base of the 5 1/2 oz. cups eliminates that problem.

"I place the them on acrylic blankets on my shelves. At that point, they don't have wicks and the holes are enough for them to absorb the water they need. Once they get to a point when they are falling over in the plastic cup I move them to a larger, 4" pot and begin using a wick. All this time, I continue to pinch the buds and feed them my regular 20-20-20 fertilizer. I watch for roots coming out of the bottom and when I see them, I move the plant to the next-sized pot.

"Six weeks before the show, I stop disbudding my large streps and let them come into bloom. For small or mini streps, with the small narrow leaves it takes a full month to get them into bloom, so make sure you disbud those a little longer.

"This time, all of my show plants were in 6 inch pots, but I find growing a *Strep* in that large a pot to be quite difficult: it's so easy to crack and damage leaves when I rotate my plants and I'm pressed for "head space," trying to get the blooms to open without touching my lights. I also try to grow all my streps on the bottom shelf, since they prefer it cooler than African violets.

"One of the most important things with streps, is to have *high humidity* so you don't get brown edges. Growing them on mats give the streps the extra humidity they love. This helps prevent brown edges, and also misshapen leaves. It's

important to check your streps every day to avoid plants drying out and collapsing, since this will stress the plant and the leaf ends will start to dry back, causing permanent damage.

"My *Streps* grow in the basement, and I try to keep the temperature low but it still warms up with the lights. I do run my lights during the day since otherwise I never make it down to the basement to work on them.

"Also, always know your *Strep* varieties. *Strep-tocarpus* are like African violets, some hold their blooms longer than others, some are "droppers," and some are more floriferous than others. If I grow a *Strep* and find it's a "dropper," I usually do not grow that one again. It's no fun growing a plant for nine months, only to find that all of your bloom is lying in the bottom of the box when you get to the show."

## Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Linda Nesvacil – Wisconsin Dells, WI

'**Rrav's Irish Iona**' (10610) 04/27/2013  
(L. Nesvacil) Single-semidouble white cupped star/green edge. Medium green, wavy, serrated. **Standard**



**Rrav's Scottish Florence Ida'** (10611) 04/27/2013

(L. Nesvacil) Single-semidouble pink two-tone star. Variegated dark green, pink and cream, quilted, serrated. **Standard**

'**Rrav's Scottish Heather**' (10612) 04/27/2013

(L. Nesvacil) Single fuchsia sticktite star. Variegated dark green, pink and white, wavy. **Standard**

### APPLICATION TO JOIN

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The African Violet Society of America, Inc.

www.avsa.org

409-839-4725

avsa@earthlink.net

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# How Can I Help AVSA?

By Russell Kirchner  
*russell@optimara.com*

First, let me say "Thank you" to all who helped me participate in my first National AVSA Convention - this goes to my lovely Jami, employer Holtkamp Greenhouses, and the support staff of AVSA. I have attended and worked a lot of shows for Optimara, but when they are focused to one plant, it really becomes impressive! Seeing all those designs and hundreds of plants on display was exhilarating - good job ya'll!

*So how can I help?* For starters - the 'My' series of African violets will be registered for the 2014 convention, and many others will be joining them. (Be sure to check the Registration Report.) This is not a difficult process to achieve - I am working alongside others to help complete the plan to use Invitation post cards as my main tool. I will notify all of my local garden centers, in and around Nashville, of the coming AVSA convention. I plan to print, supply, and post a larger postcard style

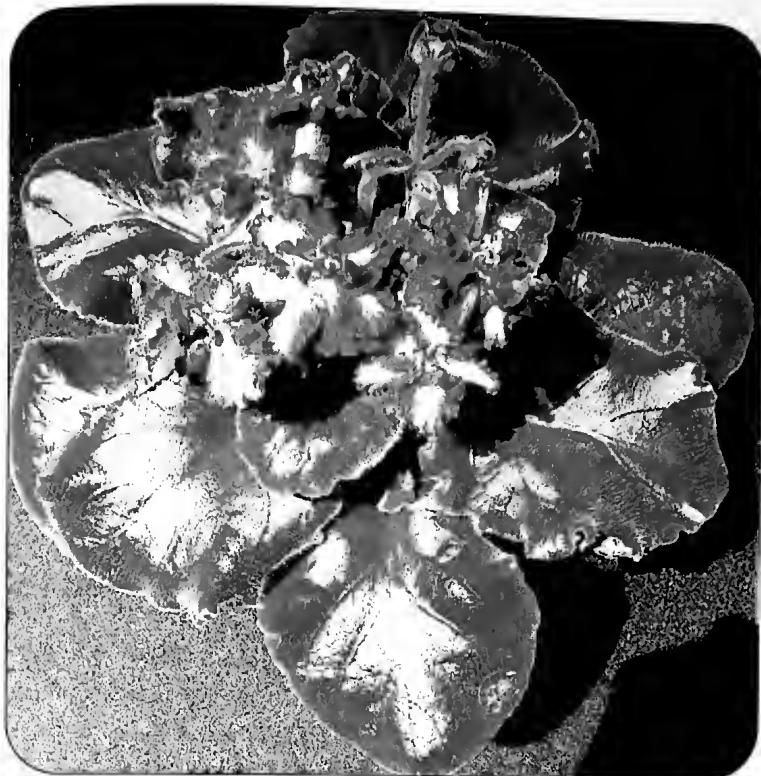
poster for stores to display. I would dearly love to have a very large attendance of the public, members and non-members, to the showroom and sale-rooms at the AVSA Nashville convention. If you have suggestions to help promote this convention, please contact me.

To the greenhouse world, the tours of the Holtkamp Greenhouses will make this a tour that will not soon be forgotten. Bring your cameras and bring your questions! The schedule is not set yet, but we will do our best to get everybody under the Optimara glass roofs.

And of course, increasing AVSA Membership is a goal of mine. I am new member, Jami will become a new member, my mother will probably become a member, and I will encourage others. I want to contribute to increase membership, retain membership, and share the importance of supporting the African Violet Society of America.



*Optimara MyLove*



***Milaia  
Siuzanna***

*Exhibited by:*

*Kathy Brewster*

*Hybridized by:*

*B. Makuni*

***Volkmann's  
Merry  
Christmas***

*Exhibited by:*

*Kathy Brewster*

*Hybridized by:*

*Volkmann*

*Standard*



# Characteristics of the Gesneriaceae Family

By Mel Robey

From his book, African Violets - Gifts from Nature, Book 1

Talk about "opening Pandora's box," try giving a general description to a family of plants that includes at least 125 genera and over two thousand species. One can venture to say not every member of this family has been discovered.

Closely examine the flowers of any gesneriad, and you will find they have much in common. Most obvious is that each flower is composed of five individual petals which are fused together to form a tube. This tube is connected to the base of the flower. In some cases, as with *Streptocarpus*, the corolla tube is very long and easily seen. African violets have a much shorter corolla tube which is not as readily identifiable.

The corolla is usually said to be two-lipped. This means two individual groups (referred to as upper and lower) of the petals are distinguishable, the upper lip having small petals and the lower lip having larger petals. Two good examples of members of the family whose flowers are two-lipped are the florist gloxinias and African violets with the "star" shaped blossoms.

At the base of each flower are five small, leaflike structures which botanists call the calyx. The individual leaflike appendages of the calyx are called sepals. The calyx may be extremely small and hardly noticeable or very large, hairy, and leaflike in appearance. Often the calyx is significant in adding to the beauty of the flower. Other times, the grower finds them unattractive and gets rid of the plant.

The reproductive organs of a flower consist of a pistil and stamens. The seed, produced after pollination, develops in a single-celled (carpel) ovary that is superior on the flower stalk. A superior ovary is one in which the individual petals or corolla tube, as is the case with members of the Gesneriaceae family, are fused to the flower stalk below the ovary. The stamens and sepals are also fused to the flower stalk beneath the ovary.

If the petals, sepals, and the stamens fuse to-

gether at the top of the ovary, then the flower would be referred to as having an inferior ovary. Of course, there is an exception to the gesneriads having superior ovaries. *Sinningia* species have the distinction of producing flowers that do not fit into the classification scheme of either a superior or inferior ovary. It seems the corolla tube, stamens, and calyx all fuse together about midway up the side of the ovary. Botanists have a name for everything, and you will be interested in knowing that the ovary of the *Sinningia* is referred to as being perigynous.

Each flower will produce two to four stamens. These are the structures responsible for producing the pollen. The stamens are attached to the base of the flower, beside the ovary.

Most often, the flower will develop from the axil of a leaf. A single flower borne high above the plant on a peduncle, or numerous flowers, can be found displaying their sassiness at the tip of the flower stalk. The small branch from the peduncle to the base of the flower is called the pedicel.

The leaves found in this family range in size from a fraction of an inch long to several feet in length. Seldom are the leaf margins lobed. Hairs may or may not be present, depending on the species.

The plants produce fibrous roots that are adapted for growing in pots. Many plants produce tubers (*Nautilocalyx*, *Sinningia* and *Chrysothemis*) and rhizomes (*Achimenes*, *Gloxinia*, and *Koellikeria*). Both the tubers and the rhizomes afford the gardener opportunity to increase their collection of plants through vegetative reproduction.

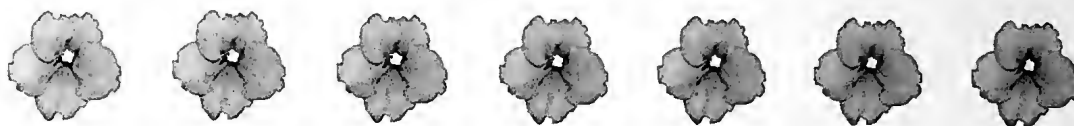
If you have ever grown many of the gesneriads from seed, you should have noticed something unusual about the development of some of the plants as they first emerge from the seeds. Normally when the seeds of the dicot classifica-

tion of plants (apple trees, radishes, beans, black-eyed Susan's, African violets) germinate, two small leaflike structures emerge from the potting mixture. These are called cotyledons and since there are two, botanists describe them as being dicotyledon (as opposed to monocotyledon plants such as: corn, bluegrass, wheat and bamboo).

Cotyledons are the food storage units in the seed that supply the tiny emerging plant with the energy needed for growing until the leaves have started forming and photosynthesis begins. When this happens, the plants are capable of manufacturing their own food, and the cotyledons are no longer necessary, at which point they normally shrivel up and die.

Now, back to the story of how some members of the Gesneriaceae family do not fit the normal mold of the dicot plants. In some species, when the cotyledons emerge from the potting mixture, one of the cotyledons shrivels up and dies, while the other one continues to grow and enlarge. In the case of the *Streptocarpus* species: *rexii*, *polyanthus*, *saudersiae* and *grandis*, this single cotyledon will continue to grow and enlarge into the only leaf the plant will produce. Other plants of this odd fraternity are those usually found growing in the Old World.

There you have it, an overview of the basic characteristics you will find in most of the members of the Gesneriaceae family.



## Best Articles of 2012

By Lynne Wilson,  
*Publications Chair*

This year there were many wonderful articles written for the African Violet Magazine. The African Violet Society of America Officers, Directors, and Standing Committee Chairmen had a difficult time selecting the top five articles but this is the final tally:

### **"TAMING TRAILERS"**

by Sandra Skalski - Nov., page 14

### **"DON'T LOSE YOUR CROWN!"**

by Pat Hancock - March, page 11

### **"LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!"**

by Paul Kroll - Sept., page 23

### **"UNDERWATER FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS"**

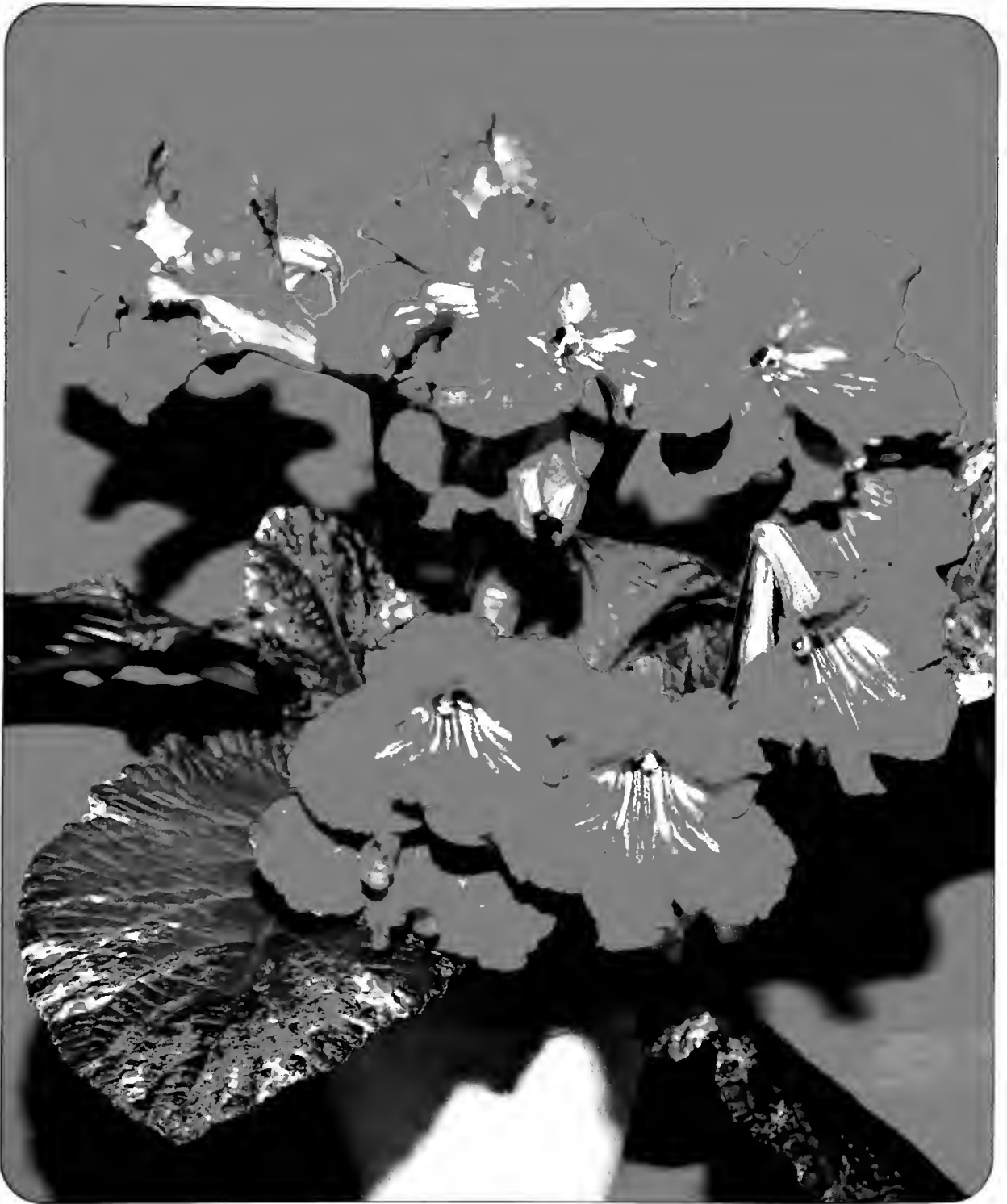
by Edna Rourke - May, page 42

### **"RECOGNIZING AND CORRECTING LIGHT PROBLEMS"**

by Amy Cash-Allison - Jan., page 38

Consider writing an article for the AVM on a topic you are enthused about. Your name could be on next year's best list.

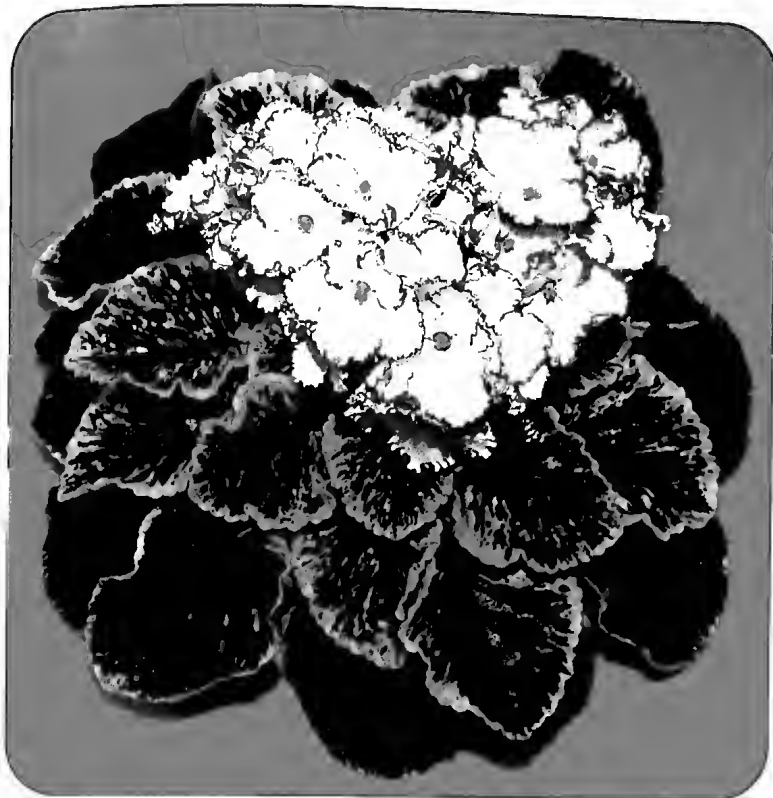




*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## *Streptocarpus 'Iced Pink Flamingo'*

*Exhibited by: Diane Buck*



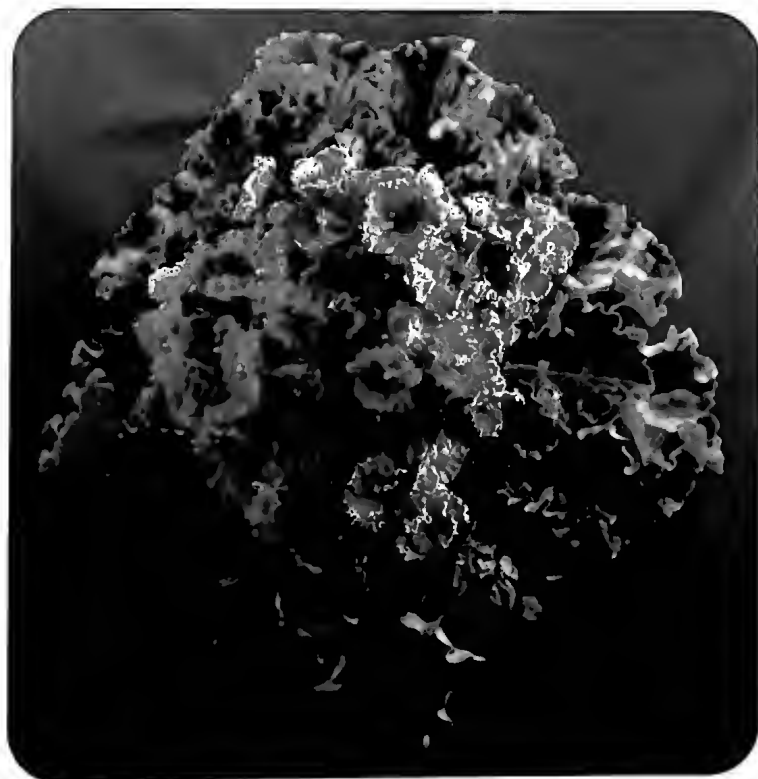
*Sport of  
'Lonestar  
Helen Mahr'*

*Exhibited by:  
Susan Kautz*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

*EverGlory*

*Exhibited by:  
Alcie Maxwell  
Hybridized by:  
Holtkamp  
Large Standard*



*Photo Credit: Alcie Maxwell*

# "And the winners are ..."

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

By Mary J. Corondan

Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

**AVC OF BURLINGTON COUNTY, NJ – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Picasso, Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, Buckeye Colossal; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Soliloquy, Rob's Jitterbug, Pink Dove; Best in Show/Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5f clone *orbicularis*; Best Standard: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; Best Semiminiature: Raspberry Glitz; Best Miniature: Pink Dove; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Sandy Skalski**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Moonsilk, Jersey Little Devil, Little Bountiful; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Kim'; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Sue Arnao**.

**AVC OF GREATER ATLANTA, GA – Winners:** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Amethyst Confetti, Rob's Chilly Willy, Optimara Little Amethyst; Best Semiminiature: Kid Karla; Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy, **Catherine Carter**. Best in Show/Best Standard: EK-Blue-Eyed Russia, **Mark Jackson**. Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Bright Eyes'; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Johnnie Berry**. Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kathy Spissman**.

**AVC OF MORRIS COUNTY, NJ – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Jersey Snow Flakes, Jersey Snow Drops, Rebel's Splatter Kake; 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Pink Buttercups, Irish Flirt, Eternal Orbit; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Jolly Star; Best Standard: Heinz's Sentimental; Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy; Best Trailer: Jersey Rose Trail; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* Silvert; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Bob Kurzynski**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Ness' Cranberry Swirl, Mac's Misty Meadow; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Lavender Rosette', **Jill Fisher**. Best Design, **Karyn Cichocki**. Design Sweepstakes, **Emilia Rykowski**.

**AV COUNCIL OF SOUTH CALIFORNIA, CA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: King's Ransom, Priatnaia, Robert Mayer; 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Hondo Honey, Gum Drop, Heaven's Smile; Best Miniature: Rob's Gum Bub-



ble; Best Trailer: Rob's Stickey Wicket; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Gay Wilson**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Shirl's Cranberry Smoothie, Thunder Surprise, Optimara Little Chickasaw; Best in Show/Best Standard: Optimara My Joy; Best Semiminiature: Thunder Surprise; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5cl clone *tongwensis*, **Leonard Re**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Thad's Pink Crocodile', **Chris Hedberg**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Leslie Cox**.

**AV AND GS OF ROCHESTER, NY – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Harbor Blue, B-Man's Caltanissetta, Waterdancer; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Fuzzy Navel, Cool Blue, Optimara Little Maya; Best in Show/Best Standard: Waterdancer; Best Semiminiature: Kentucky Gooseberries; Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet, **Doug Burdick**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Powder Keg, Chicago Flair, Ma's Pillow Talk, **Olive Ma Robinson**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Optimara Little Moonstone, Optimara Little Ruby, Jolly Ace; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Mary Ryan**. Best Trailer: Rob's Lilli Pilli, **Wendy Delorme**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei*; Design Sweepstakes, **Laura Buckner**. Best Design, **Barb Festenstein**.

**AV AND GS OF WESTERN NEW YORK, NY – Winners:** Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* clone *grandifolia* No. 237, *Saintpaulia* clone *confusa* Uppsala 2005-0419, *Saintpaulia* clone *ionantha*; Best in Show/Best Standard, Neptune; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *confusa* Uppsala 2005-0419; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Paul Kroll**. Best Trailer: Baby Brian, **Elaine Geiger**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Holly Pohl**.

**AVS OF SPRINGFIELD, PA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Red Mount Fuji, Playful Rainbow, Bud's Cassie; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Neil Lipson**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Treasure Chest, Strawberry Sundae, Crystallaire; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cool Blue, Celina Dark Velvet, Senk's Vespa Verde; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Joan Santino**. Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 51 clone *grandifolia* No. 237,

*Saintpaulia* 5f clone *orbicularis* var. *purpurea*, *Saintpaulia* 3 clone *shumensis*; Best in Show/Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 3 clone *shumensis*, **Peggy Mooney**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 8 clone *rupicola*, *Saintpaulia* 5g clone *pendula*, *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone Sigi Falls; Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Ozark Rosy Cheeks', **Linda Kilby**. Best Standard: The Alps, **Leslie Swezey**. Best Semiminiature: Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Trailer: Bashful Trailer, **Barbara Jones**. Best Miniature: Petite Blarney, **Linda Wurzer**.

**AVS OF SYRACUSE, NY – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Blue Dragon, Frozen in Time, Waterdancer; Best in Show/Best Standard: Frozen in Time, **Karen Dupree**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Harbor Blue, Amour Elite, Silverglade Beads; Best Trailer: Yesterday's Cherry Cola; Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subspecies *grandifolia*, **Bill and Robin Yager**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Optimara Little Moonstone, Optimara Little Ruby, Jolly Sailor; Best Semiminiature: Rinky Dink; Best Miniature: Optimara Little Moonstone; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Mary Ryan**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Tiger Stripe', **Barbara Leonard**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Kathleen Garbarino**.

**ALBUQUERQUE AVC, NM – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara South Dakota, Chinook Wind, Picasso; Best in Show/Best Standard: Chinook Wind; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Silver Sheen', **Jo Ellen Bowden**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Glacier, Tomorrow's Sunbeam, EK-Belaia Koroleva; Best Semiminiature: K's Pink Agate; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kathy Hajner**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Margaret Schmierer**.

**ANNAPOLIS VALLEY AVS, NOVA SCOTIA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Lorus' Springtime, Rebel's Astro Spinner, Frozen in Time; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Cranberry Swirl, Rob's Mad Cat, Rob's Peedletuck; Best in Show/Best Standard: Lorus' Springtime; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Mad Cat; Best Miniature: Persian Prince; Best Trailer: Pony Ride; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *rupicola*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Heather Eakins**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Cleopatra', **Valerie Despres**. Best Design, **Frances Shilliday**.

**BALTIMORE AV AND GESNERIAD CLUB, MD – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Magnolia, Moon Child, Secret Rendezvous; Best in

Show/Best Standard: Moon Child; Best Trailer: Jersey Girl Trail; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'TJ', **Marie Burns**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Boo Man, Ness' Cranberry Swirl, Rob's Zipper Zapper; Best Semiminiature: Queen Sabrina; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *grandifolia* No. 299; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Andrew Norris**. Best Miniature: Mickey Mouse, **Shirley Huffman**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Jim Roberts**.

**BAY STATE AVS, MA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Scrumptious, Buckeye Too Tempting, Buckeye Sentimental Reasons, **Nancy Manozzi**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Willawong, Rob's Humpty Doo, Rob's Gundaroo; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Willawong; Best Miniature: Chantaspring, **Sherry Pearl**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Dark Kiss, Rob's Ice Maiden, Celina Dark Velvet; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Holly Walker**. Best Standard: Coral Kiss, **Carol Hess**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia rupicola*, **Eleanor MacIver**. Best Design, **Susan Stafford**. Design Sweepstakes, **Cheryl Salatino**.

**CAPITAL DISTRICT AVS, NY – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Picasso, Smokey Moon, Strawberry Sundae; Best in Show/Best Standard: The Alps; Best Trailer: Ramblin' Lassie; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5g clone *pendula* var. *kizarae*; Best Gesneriad: *Kohleria* 'Rattlesnake'; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Margaret Califano**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Knight Magic, Precious Red, Blue Scoundrel; Best Miniature: Precious Red; Design Sweepstakes, **Dorothy Raymond**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fuddy Duddy, **Kirstin Russell**.

**CINCINNATI AVS, OH – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, Buckeye Narcissistic, Optimara EverPraise; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Antique Rose, Rob's Perfect Peach, Lollipop Kid; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; Best Trailer: Milky Way Trail, **Pat Gibson**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Slap Happy; Best Miniature: Rob's Rinky Dink; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Debbie McInnis**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Moonlight Valley', **Penny Wichman**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Mel Grice**.

**COLUMBUS AVS, OH – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ballet Anna, Blue Dragon, Mary Craig; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Satin Rose, Jolly Dear, Jolly Devil; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler;

Best Semiminiature: Jolly Devil, **Mary Martin**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ramblin' Lassie, Rob's Lilli Pilli, Darling Blue Trail, **Judy Karcher**. Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* clone Cha Simba, *Saintpaulia* clone *schumensis* Mather EE, *Saintpaulia* clone *grandifolia* No. 237; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *grandifolia* No. 237; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Nancy Carr**. Best Miniature: Honey Blue Ace, **Julie Jones**. Best Trailer: Rob's Kalangadoo; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Cathy Willis**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Jim's Canadian Sunset', **Richard Carr**.

**DELAWARE AV AND GS, DE - Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Alison's Laughter, EK-Golubglazaia Rossia, Ma's Neon Lights, **Carol Moody**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Little Pro, Irish Flirt; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fuddy Duddy; Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Design Sweepstakes, **Bobbie LaFashia**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Dress Rehearsal; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Serenity', **Libby Benhke**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia orbicularis*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Barbara Borleske**. Best Design, **Terry Celano**.

**DIXIE AVS, MS - Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Frozen in Time, Harbor Blue, San Mateo Blues; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Spring Cardinal, Rob's Zipper Zapper, Electric Cowboy; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Brenda Brasfield**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Paris Affair, Ma's Soiree, Dress Rehearsal; 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Suicidal Squirrel, Jolly Devil, Rob's Combustible Pigeon, **Donna Ferguson**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Berry Happy, **Sharon Gartner**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Peedletuck; Best Miniature: Rob's Jitterbug, **Laura Moser**. Best Trailer: Milky Way Trail, **Bobbi Johannsen**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 8 clone *rupicola*, **Pam Kopec**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Karlyn', **Ann Shirley**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Mary Lou Harden**.

**EARLY BIRD VC, AL - Winners:** Best in Show/Best Standard: Frosted Whisper, **Michael Jackson**. Best Semiminiature: Jolly Champ, **Allen Mealer**. Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy; Best Trailer: Rob's Jindalee, **Jamie Walcott**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone *tongwensis*; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Christmas Morning', **Sandra Campbell**. Best Design, **Donna Henderson**.

**FIRST AVS OF WICHITA FALLS, TX - Winners:** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Orchid, Jolly Apollo, Planet Kid; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Standard: Hawaiian Pearl; Best Semiminiature: Me Me Emily; Best Trailer: Yesterday's Child; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *grotci*; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Gwen'; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Patricia Daniel**.

**FIRST HALIFAX AVS, NOVA SCOTIA - Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Celebrity Status, Buckeye Cornucopia, Buckeye Seductress; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Antique Rose, Ness' Crinkle Blue, Jersey Jazz; Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* clone *velutina* Amazon, *Saintpaulia* clone *orbicularis* var. *purpurea*, *Saintpaulia* clone *ionantha* Mather No. 20; Best in Show/Best Standard: Fanny Sue; Best Semiminiature: Ness' Crinkle Blue; Best Miniature: Jolly Joy; Best Trailer: Rob's Lilli Pilli; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *ionantha* Mather No. 20; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Blue Leyla'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Anne Brown**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Frozen in Time, Marching Band, Optimara Maui, **Mike McLeod**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Patti Vaison**.

**GARDEN STATE AVC, NJ - Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, Buckeye Love's Caress, Tiger; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Outer Orbit, Rob's Scrumptious, Jersey Lilacs; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; Best Miniature: Precious Red; Best Trailer: Sweet Amy Sue; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Paula Bal**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Heat Wave, Sassy Sister, Rob's Silver Spook; Best Semiminiature: Allegro Pepto Pink, **Tim Ferguson**. Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia brevopilosa*, *Saintpaulia* 5f clone *orbicularis*, *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *confusa* Mather E; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5h clone *velutina*, **Grace Egan**. Best Gesneriad: *Kohleria* 'Strawberry Fields', **Heather Menzel**. Best Design, **Luanne Arico**. Design Sweepstakes, **Grace Rarich**.

**LAKESHORE VS OF TORONTO, ONTARIO - Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, Aca's Flying Free, The Alps; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Heritage Frolic, Morgan's Bibighar, Von's Baby Jay; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Pet; Best Miniature: Gleeful Elf; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Brett Flewelling**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Smokey Moon,



Optimara Affection, Optimara EverHarmony; Best in Show/Best Standard: Smokey Moon, **Olga Semova**. Best Trailer: Blustery Trail, **Steven Kerr**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia schumensis*, **Beverley Williams**. Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Deep Purple Dreamin', **Bill Price**. Best Design, **Julie Thompson**. Design Sweepstakes, **Steven Kerr**.

**LONG ISLAND AVS, NY – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Proud Country, Buckeye Lace Petticoats, Harbor Blue; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Pewter Bells, Rob's Heat Wave, Spring Cardinal; Best in Show/Best Standard: Proud Country; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Heat Wave; Best Trailer: Pixie Blue; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Lois Szostak**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Lacy Lass, Silent Prayer, Ness' Bangle Blue; Best Gesneriad: *Columnea* 'Lava Flow', **Dorothy Vogt**. Best Miniature: Precious Red; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Diane Lohan**.

**NAUGATONIC AVS, CT – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Maine, Optimara Madrid, Rhapsodie Michelle II; 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Gold Coins, Blue Silhouette, Optimara Little Cheyenne, **Roger Wheeler**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Fancy Trail, Honeysuckle Rose, Sunrise Waltz; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Munchkin Kisses, Sassy Sister, Gold Coins; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Kentucky Rambler; Best Semiminiature: Gold Coins; Best Standard: Optimara Maine; Best Gesneriad: *Columnea* 'Cascading Beauty'; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Edna Rourke**.

**OSHKOSH AVS, WI – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Grandmother's Halo, Ma's Wicked Witch, Ma's Mardi Gras; Best in Show/Best Standard: Grandmother's Halo; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Sun Chaser; Best Miniature: Precious Red; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone *tongwensis*; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Patina'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kevin Degner**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Devotion, Optimara Monet, Allegro Loco Motion; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Little Pueblo, Cool Blue, Optimara Little Blackfoot, **Betsy Fox**. Best Trailer: Falling Snow, **Cathy Heider**. Best Design, **Ruth Mengsol**. Design Sweepstakes (tie): **Kevin Degner, Betsy Fox and Doug Kindschuh**.

**RICHMOND AVS, VA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Apache Watercolor, Park Av-

enue Blue, Frozen in Time; Best Semiminiature: Senk's Vespa Verde; Best Miniature: Planet Kid, **David Dick**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Chanticleer; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* Silver, **Kitty Hedgepeth**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Aiko'; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Barbara Stewart**. Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Josane Wagner**.

**SAINTPAULIA SOCIETY OF LONG ISLAND, NY – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Apache Sunburst, Proud Country, Taffeta Blue; 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Bahama Mama, Denny Boo, Heaven's Smile; Best Standard: Taffeta Blue; Best Gesneriad: *Kohleria* 'Manchu'; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Carolyn Klein**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Calypso Beat, Rob's Berry Shake, Ness' Sno Fun; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Shirl's Hawaiian Lei; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Calypso Beat; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *confusa*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Joe Palagonia**.

**SEATTLE AVS, WA – Winners:** Best in Show/Best Trailer: Pixie Blue; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Ruth Young**. Best Standard: Frozen in Time, **Jean Chin**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Slap Happy, **John Wrightson**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *diplotricha* var. Parker, **Bob Clark**. Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Carefree's Regina', **Buu Huyhn**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Pat Shandrow**.

**SHO-ME AVC, MO – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Night Music, Mindi Brooke, Ma's Taffy Swirl; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Night Music, **Mary Ann Bjorgaard**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Cherished Hope, Cajun's Drama Queen, Moon Child; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Playmate, Rob's Boogie Woogie, Rob's Sarsparilla; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Boogie Woogie; Best Miniature: Imp's Fairy Berry; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Lynn Canning**. Best Trailer: Linda Darnell, **Tricia Taylor**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Jim's Daphne's Choice', **Doris Brown**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Linda Hall**.

**STAMPEDE CITY AVS, ALBERTA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard: Aca's Flying Free, Cherries 'n' Cream, Austin's Smile; Best in Show/Best Standard: Austin's Smile, **Jean Melnechuk**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Sticky Wicket, Rob's Galiwinku, Rob's Humpty



Doo; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Lisa Kappel**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Redhead, Jolly Rain, Golden Dawn, **Maida de-nOudsten**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Antique Rose, **Melanie Duan**. Best Miniature: Pink Dove, **Maureen Tkachuk**. Best Trailer: Happy Trails, **Lynn Moore**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5g clone *pendula kizarae*, **Betty Fenerty**. Best Gesneriad: *Amalophyllon* sp. RM 2006, **Norma Kunzel**.

**SUNDOWNER'S AVS, LA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Sea Breezes, Favorite Child, Cajun's Queen's Sugar; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Sea Breezes; Best Trailer: Cajun's Swamp Trail; Best Gesneriad: *Kohleria* 'Cajun's Fuzzy Navel'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Belinda Thibodeaux**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Bishop, Phobos, Psychedelic Show, **George Ramirez**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Precious Red, Rob's Bad Bunny, Rob's Jitterbug; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Outer Orbit; Best Miniature: Rob's Jitterbug, **Laura Moser**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Jindalee, Rob's Lilli Pilli, Rob's Willawong, **Wilhelmina Allen**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia rupicola*, **Pam Kopec**. Best Design, **Sallie Barlow**. Design Sweepstakes, **Susie Smith**.

**TIDEWATER AVS, VA – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Frozen in Time, Chanticleer, Treasure Chest; Best Gesneriad: *Columnea* 'Light Prince'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **LaDonna Hopson**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Apache Warpath, **Linda Stinnette**. Best Semiminiature: Winnergreen, **Sue Hoffman**. Best Trailer: Lady Trail, **Pat Knight**. Best Design, **Carol Van**. Design

Sweepstakes, **Pat Knight**.

**TORONTO AVS, ONTARIO – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara EverHarmony, Rebel's Rosebud, Smokey Moon; 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Combustible Pigeon, Lakeshore Silver, Von's Small Gift; Best in Show/Best Standard: Smokey Moon; Best Miniature: Pink Dove; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Olga Semova**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: *Saintpaulia rupicola*, *Saintpaulia ionantha* subspecies *grotei*, *Saintpaulia ionantha* subspecies *ionantha* var. *ionantha*; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Mac's Misty Meadow, Rob's Combustible Pigeon, Morgan's Barossa; Best Design, **Sayeh Beheshti**. Best Semiminiature: Lakeshore Silver; Best Trailer: Blustery Trail; Design Sweepstakes, **Steven Kerr**. Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Deep Purple Dreamin', **Bill Price**.

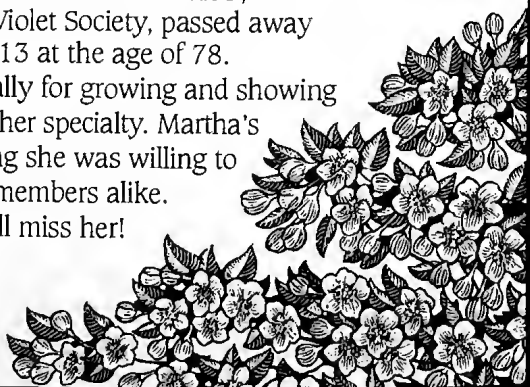
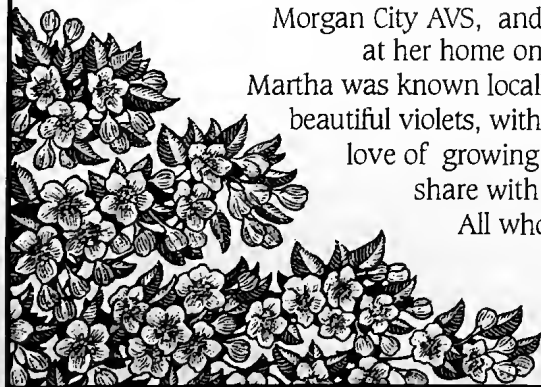
**TUCSON AVS, AZ – Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: East Wind, Optimara EverGrace, Ma's Spanish Eyes; Best in Show/Best Standard: Ma's Spanish Eyes, **Barbara Reith**. 2<sup>nd</sup> Best AVSA Standard Collection: Lyon's Spun Sugar, Ness' Ballyhoo Blue, Fisherman's Paradise; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Bristol's Tractor Beam', **Kathy Bell**. Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* Silvert, *Saintpaulia* clone *difficilis*, *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone House of Amani; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone House of Amani; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Anne-Lee Tomczyk**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Astro Zombie, **Ken McGowan**. Best Miniature: Precious Red, **Gloria Williams**. Best Trailer: Dresden Doll, **Judy Millstone**. Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Allan Reith**.

## In Memory

Martha Nell Dyson, a longtime member of Sundowners African Violet Society of Louisiana, Dixie AVS, and past member of LACO, Morgan City AVS, and Atchafalaya Violet Society, passed away at her home on June 6th, 2013 at the age of 78.

Martha was known locally and nationally for growing and showing beautiful violets, with trailers being her specialty. Martha's love of growing was something she was willing to share with new and old members alike.

All who knew her will miss her!



# The Journey Continues

By Paris Merriam

In the previous January/February 2004 issue of this magazine, I wrote an article titled *'The Journey for Tally Time Winners.'* This story was about an adventure to find some of the standard African violet Tally Time Winners from 2001 and 2002. And just like clock-work, the Tally Time Winners were published once again in the March/April 2013 issue of the *African Violet Magazine*.



Lela Marie

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

The standard Tally Time Winners from 2001 and 2002 were: *Picasso*, *Ode to Beauty*, *Fisherman's Paradise*, *Windy Day*, *Powwow*, *Lela Marie*, *Optimara Trinidad*, *Harbor Blue*, *East Wind*, *Bertha*, *Smooch Me*, and *The Alps*.

As I have been growing African violets for years, once again, I was inspired to find some of the standard 2012 Tally Time Winners and grow them. They include: *Frozen in Time*, *Amour Elite*, *Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler*, *The Alps*, and *Makin' Romance*. So far, I have been able to find four of them.

It should be interesting to note that the only standard African violet still on the Tally Time Winner list is *The Alps*, a beautiful chimera offered by Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses ([www.lyndonlyon.com](http://www.lyndonlyon.com)). In addition, I still grow one of my all-time favorites, *Harbor Blue*, a Tally Time Winner from 2001 and 2002.

So where did I find most of the 2012 Tally Time Winners for sale? From Gini McCanne, owner of Violet Perfection (909-624-8331). Gini makes her way each year to a spring flower and garden show held near my home, and I always buy some African violets from her. In fact, I still grow a few plants that I bought from her in the past. This year I purchased a *Blue Dragon*, a *Frozen in Time*, and an *Amour Elite* from her. I bought *The Alps* from The Violet Barn ([www.violetbarn.com](http://www.violetbarn.com)), and another one from Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses ([www.lyndonlyon.com](http://www.lyndonlyon.com)).

So the journey continues, and I'll enjoy growing some of the Tally Time Winners. And since these African violets have already proven themselves to be winners on the show table, then perhaps someday, these beautiful plants can be a centerpiece on my table, right here at home.



Blue Dragon

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

# CHECKING FOR PESTS

By Dr. Charles Cole

From his book, *Insect and Mite Pests of African Violets*

Frequent examination is necessary in an effort to detect pests which have infested your plants. Weekly examinations are usually frequent enough to detect pests before populations increase to damaging levels. In greenhouse operations, this may take a considerable effort. In a home where fewer plants are involved, plants are generally observed much more frequently, as they are given the TLC of normal grooming.

Thorough examination of plants is a must. Chewing pests and their damage can usually be detected easily with the most casual examination of the plant as their large size and the physical damage they cause are quite obvious. This is not the case for most sucking pests which are small, secretive in nature, and may cause symptoms which are not immediately visible. The plant must be thoroughly examined to detect the pests. In most instances, damage from these small sucking pests is detected long before the pests are found.

Growers examining plants should look for any physical abnormalities such as holes in the leaves, damaged buds, or discolored areas where tissue has been destroyed. Also, look for any abnormality such as plant stunting, a fading out or yellowing of the plant color, wilted foliage, yellow spots on the leaves, and deformed or abnormal growth such as twisted petioles and "puckered" or cupped leaves. You should also look for white waxy residues or honeydew on plant foliage. Thrips feeding often results in pollen being scattered on the foliage.

Plants should be inspected prior to purchasing, whenever possible. New plants should be held in isolation before placing them in your culture if they are suspected as being infested with pests.

Transporting plants from house to house, from greenhouse to house, or to and from a show or exhibit often results in infestation. These are usually light infestations and may not be immediately detectable. Thus, plants transported from one place

to another should be closely observed for a few weeks once they have reached their destination.

Plant examination can be effective for detecting most pests, once the grower learns what to look for and has a bit of experience. Until the necessary expertise has been achieved, a grower should seek the assistance of an experienced person. The use of a lox hand lens or a microscope greatly aids in pest detection and identification. Magnification is essential for early detection of cyclamen mites and other small pests.

Each person will develop their own specific techniques for examining plants. Certain techniques that will help growers detect pests include the following:

- 1) Examine the overall plant health. Look for wilted appearance, dull foliage, discolored foliage, physical damage to leaves, flowers or buds, and for deformed growth such as twisted or cupped leaves.

- 2) Look for pollen, honeydew, a white waxy powder, or other residue on the foliage.

- 3) Examine the underside of leaves, with particular attention to the area along the midvein and other main leaf veins.

- 4) Examine the upper surface of the leaves, in the area where the leaf petiole joins the leaf blade.

- 5) Examine the small, tender leaves in the terminal of the plant.

- 6) Examine flower petals and flower buds for the presence of pests or evidence of pest feeding.

- 7) Examine the rootball for soil mealybugs or the white waxy material produced by mealybugs.

- 8) Examine water reservoirs for pests or for waxy residue produced by mealybugs and other small insects.

Examine mats, pot rims and edges, trays, and shelves or benches for pests or residue.

Learning how to identify pests and to detect

pest damage early can enhance pest control and prevent serious problems in your culture.

## SELECTING A PESTICIDE

Selecting an effective pesticide is fast becoming a science. An ever-increasing number of factors must be considered before purchasing and using a pesticide. African violet enthusiasts must know a great deal about pesticides if they are to achieve effective control of the various violet pests and maintain the aesthetic value of their plants.

We may define a pesticide as any substance or mixture of substances intended to prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate a pest. Included with the pesticides are substances or mixtures of substances intended for use as a plant growth regulator, defoliant, or desiccant (drying agent).

## TYPES OF PESTICIDES

**Repellents:** Substances which are used to repel or keep pests away from an area, a plant, or group of plants. Repellents may be specific, such as substances used to keep deer and rabbits out of a vegetable garden, dogs and cats out of a flower bed, or mosquitoes off a camper or hunter.

**Plant Growth Regulators:** Substances commonly used in commercial greenhouse operations to develop a compact plant with uniform growth. Plant growth regulators are also used in commercial agriculture to regulate plant height, enhance fruit set, and to improve other specific characteristics of plant growth.

**Herbicides:** Substances used to kill plants in un-

wanted areas or "weeds". Herbicides are used as lawn edgers, to eliminate grasses in flower beds and broadleaf plants in lawns. Herbicides are useful in controlling plants around the outside of greenhouses and along right of ways.

**Fungicides:** Substances which are intended to kill fungi. Fungicides may be specific for certain fungi and may give excellent control of one disease but not another.

**Miticides:** Substances intended specifically for the control of mites.

**Nematicides:** Substances intended for controlling nematodes.

**Bactericides:** Substances intended for the control of bacteria.

**Rodenticides:** Substance intended for the control of rodents (rats and mice).

**Molluscicides:** Substances intended for the control of mollusks such as snails and slugs.

**Insecticides:** Substances intended for controlling insects. Many substances both natural and synthetic have shown insecticidal activity.

Although some substances have activity on more than one group of pests, in general, insecticides will not control diseases caused by fungi and fungicides will not control insects, and so on. It is very important to identify your specific pest problem before using a pesticide. Too many times an individual will use a fungicide for controlling insects, or an insecticide to control a fungal disease, only to find out that the problem continues to get worse until they eventually lose their plants to the pest.

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# What Did Nature Use?

by Kent & Joyce Stork

It is always wise to try to duplicate the natural environment of a plant if it is to be grown successfully. In the wilds of eastern Africa, violets are not found with their roots growing down into heavy earth. Their roots sometimes grow into the narrowest of cracks in rocks where there is natural leaf mulch or just a little air space. Other times, the roots spread out, fully exposed, across damp, moss-covered rock.

It would appear that nature provided a tremendous amount of air to violet roots and at the same time kept those roots moist. This is the goal of any quality potting mix: Keep violet roots moist while providing ample air circulation.

From **YOU CAN Grow African Violets**



## ***Psychedelic Show***

*Exhibited by:*

*Belinda Thibodeaux*

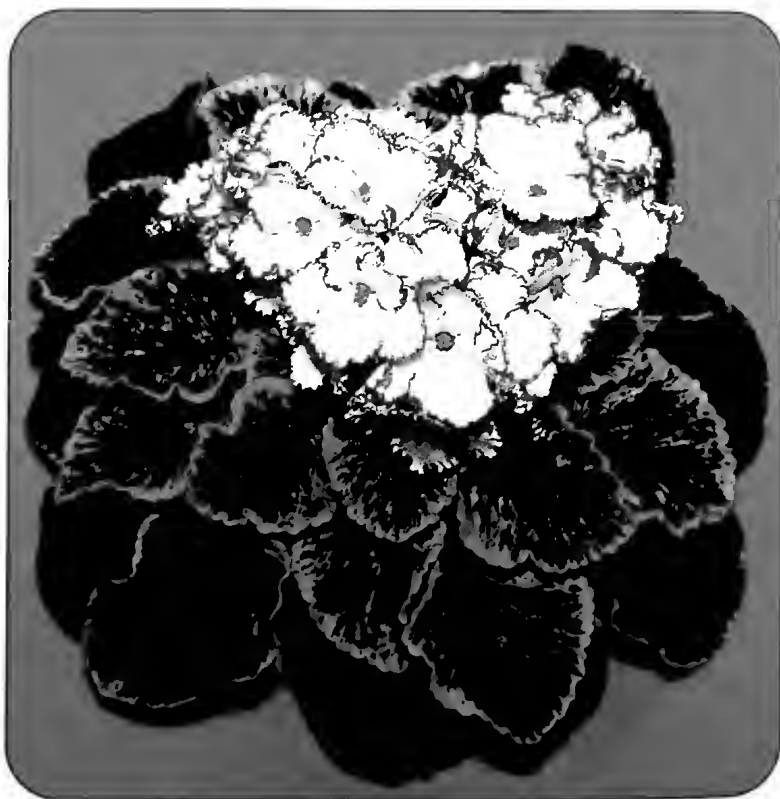
*Hybridized by:*

*P. Sorano / Lyndon*

*Lyon Greenhouses*

*Standard*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



## ***Lonestar Twilight***

*Exhibited by:*

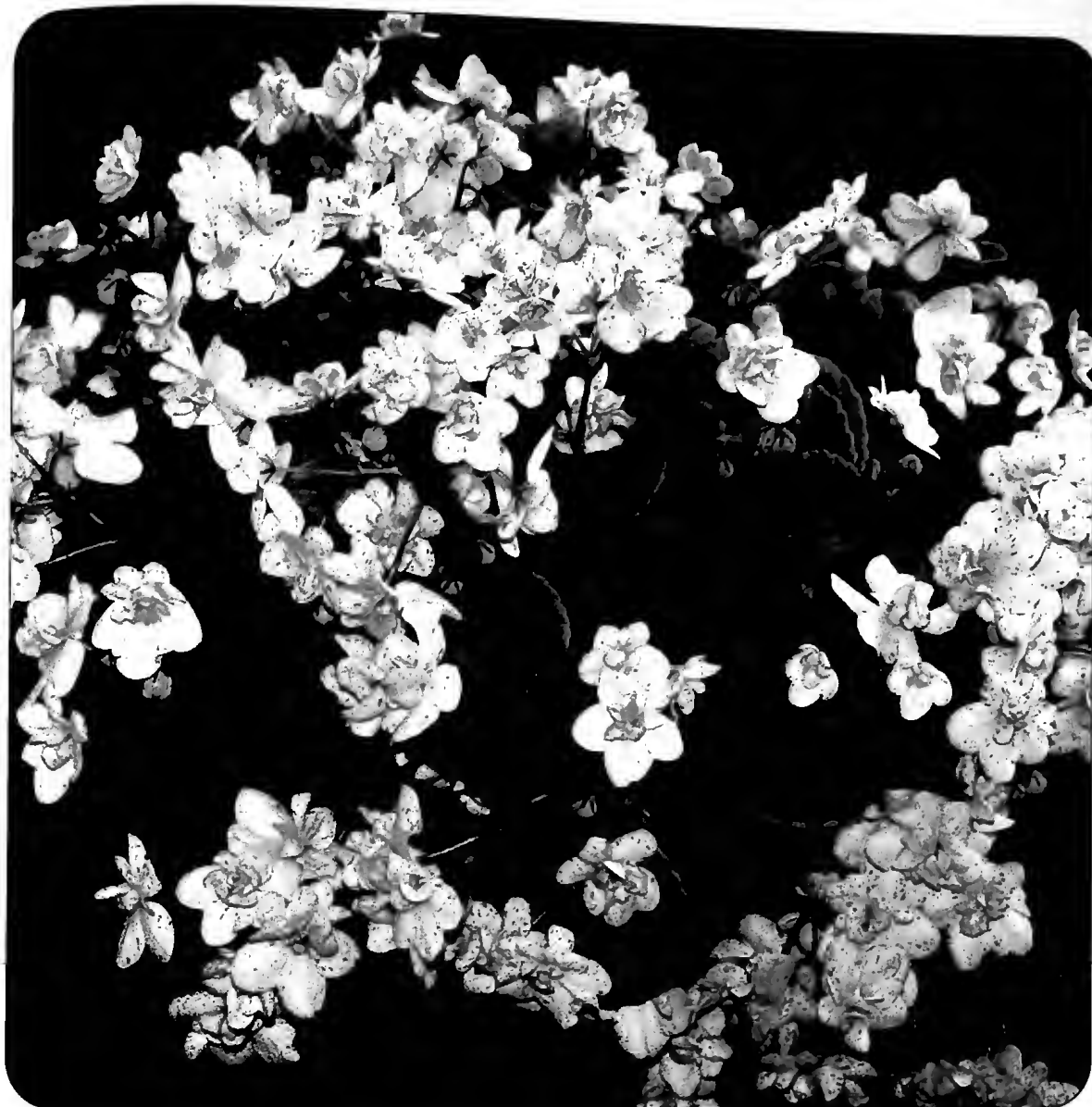
*Ben Haning*

*Hybridized by:*

*R. Nicholas*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*





*Photo Credit: Paula Bal*

## *Sweet Amy Sue*

*Grown by: Paula Bal*

*Hybridized by: P. Harris*

*Standard Trailer*



# Coming Events



## September 7 & 8 - MISSOURI

Gateway West Gesneriad Society  
Judged Show & Sale  
Beaumont Room  
Missouri Botanical Garden  
4344 Shaw Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO  
Info: Kathleen Dickman  
(618) 972-0811  
kathleendickman@att.net

## September 14 & 15 - CALIFORNIA

Delta Gesneriad Society  
Annual Judged Show/Sale  
Sacramento Garden and Arts Center  
3550 McKinley Blvd.  
Sacramento, CA  
Sept 14 - 1pm - 4pm  
Sept 15 - 11am - 3pm  
Info: Lynn Lombardo  
(530) 637-9000  
Email: lynn\_lombardo@att.net  
URL: www.sacviolets.org

## Sept 20 & 21 - OHIO

Ohio State AVS  
Kingwood Center  
900 Park Avenue West  
Mansfield, OH 44906  
Fri, Sept 20  
Sale: 9am - 5pm  
Show: 1pm - 5pm  
Workshop: 3pm  
Saturday, Sept 21,  
Show & Sale: 9am - 4pm  
Workshops: 1:30 & 2:30 pm  
Contact Lori Hilfer (440) 821-2967  
rahilfer@roadrunner.com

## September 20 & 21 - TEXAS

METRO-TRIO AVS of Dallas Annual Fall Sale  
North Haven Gardens 7700 Northhaven Road  
Both Days: 9am - 4pm  
Info: Bill Foster (972) 279-5993  
email: 1bpfoer@sbcglobal.net  
Sylvia Leeds (903) 356-2540  
email: roseotx@gmail.com  
Mary Corondan (972) 333-4748  
email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

## September 27 & 28 - IOWA

Cedar Valley AV Club Annual Show/Sale  
Crossroads Center Mall  
2060 Crossroads Blvd  
Waterloo, Iowa  
Fri 10-9, Sat 9-4  
Info: Carol Magoon  
cmagoon@heartofiowa.net  
641-751-7751

## September 28 - COLORADO

Rocky Mountain AV Council  
Annual Fall Sale  
Tagawa Garden Center  
7711 S. Parker Rd, Centennial, CO  
9am - 3pm  
Info: Nelly Levine  
NLevine28@msn.com  
www.rmavc.com Map and more info.

## October 5 - WASHINGTON

The Saintpaulia Society of Tacoma  
Annual Judged Show & Sale  
9:30am - 3pm  
Watson's Greenhouse & Nursery  
6211 Pioneer Way East  
Puyallup, WA 98371  
Info: pat@shandrow.net

## October 5 - OREGON

Portlandia AVC  
Plant Sale/Display/Demonstrations  
Portland Nursery  
9000 S.E. Division  
Portland, OR  
Hours: 10 am  
Info: Blanche Bunker 503-761-7861

## October 5 - OKLAHOMA

AVS of Greater Tulsa Fall Sale  
Oct 5 - 9am - 3pm  
Tulsa Garden Center  
2435 S. Peoria Ave  
Tulsa, OK 74114  
Info: Nancy Moerer (918) 938-6977  
Email: nmoerer@cox.net

## October 5 & 6 - MINNESOTA

North Star AV Council Twin Cities  
Fall Display/Sale  
Bachman's - 6010 Lyndale Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN  
Oct 5th, Sat, 9am - 5pm  
Oct 6th, Sun, 11am - 4pm  
Info: SteveGonzalez@live.com

**October 5 & 6 - TEXAS**

Spring Branch African Violet Club  
Annual Fall Sale  
West Gray Multiservice Center  
1475 West Gray St.  
Houston, TX

October 5 - 10am - 4pm  
October 6 - 10am - 3pm  
Info: Karla Ross 281-748-8417  
Email: kjwross@yahoo.com

**October 5 & 6 - CONNECTICUT**

Nutmeg State AVS Annual Judged Show/Sale  
Oct 5 - 1pm - 5pm  
Oct 6 - 11am - 4pm  
Homewood Suites Hotel  
6905 Main St.  
Stratford CT (at exit 53 off the Merritt Parkway)  
Admission free.  
Info: Roger Wheeler 203 924-0017

**October 11 & 12 - TEXAS**

First Austin AVS  
Annual Fall Show/Sale  
Saint John's United Methodist Church  
2140 Allandale Rd  
Austin, TX 78756  
Both Days - 9:00am-3:00pm  
Info: Susan Kautz (512)365-1818  
Email: gizzmo@austin.rr.com

**October 12 - PENNSYLVANIA**

AVS of Philadelphia  
Annual Judged Show & Plant Sale  
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Info: Carol (610) 272-6961  
Email: sqcut2@aol.com  
[http:// www.phillyviolets.org](http://www.phillyviolets.org)

**October 12 & 13- WISCONSIN**

Wisconsin Council of AV Clubs  
50th Annual Show/Sale  
Olbrich Botanical Gardens  
3330 Atwood Ave  
Madison, WI 53704  
Oct 12 - Noon-5pm  
Oct 13 - 10am-3pm  
Info: Alice Peterson (608) 298-7324  
Email: peters56@tds.net

**October 19 - MICHIGAN**

Michigan State African Violet Society  
Display and Sale  
Oct 19 - 10am - 4pm  
Matthaei Botanical Gardens

1800 Dixboro Rd  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
Seminar at 11:30 am  
Email: LynnAllen0413@comcast.net

**October 25 & 26 - MINNESOTA**

AVS of Minnesota Fall Display/Sale  
Northtown Mall  
398 Northtown Drive N.E.  
Blaine, MN 55434  
Oct 25 - 10am - 7pm  
Oct 26 - 10am - 4pm  
Info: Jude Neumann  
<http://sites.google.com/site/avsmnnesota>

**October 26 - OREGON**

Portland AVS  
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Sat. Oct 26  
Tabor Heights Methodist Church  
6161 SE Stark St  
Portland, Oregon  
Vivian Scheans (503) 652-3094  
Email: vscheans@comcast.net  
Cindi Nofziger (541) 926-8116  
Email: ccnofziger@comcast.net

**November 2 & 3 - NEW JERSEY**

TriState African Violet Council  
Annual Show/Sale  
Frelinghuysen Arboretum  
53 East Hanover Ave.  
Morristown, NJ  
Nov 2 - 1:30pm - 4:30pm  
Nov 3 - 10:30am - 3:00pm  
Info: Jan Murasko  
Email: jmurasko@comcast.net

**November 2 & 3 - MISSOURI**

AVC of Greater Kansas City  
Annual Show/Sale  
Loose Park Garden Center  
51st Street and Wornall  
Kansas City, MO  
Nov. 2 - 9am - 3pm  
Nov. 3 - 10am - 3pm  
Info: Fred & Pat Inbody  
(816) 373-6915  
E-Mail: kskd1@juno.com

**November 7 - 9 - NORTH CAROLINA**

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DoubleTree by Hilton, New Bern Riverfront  
100 Middle St, New Bern, NC 28560  
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Info: Sue Hoffmann (757) 463-5383  
email: sue.hoffmann@cox.net



*Photo Credit: Paula Bal*

## *Jersey Little Devil*

*Grown by: Paula Bal*

*Hybridized by: Bob Kurzynski*

*Semiminiature*

# MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

June 1, 2013  
Austin, Texas

The Annual Meeting of the African Violet Society of America, Inc. was called to order by Third Vice President, Dr. Richard Nicholas, at 3:28 PM in the Trinity Room of the Renaissance Austin Hotel, Austin, Texas. The invocation was given by Joyce Stork. Dr. Nicholas led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Dr. Nicholas introduced the officers and presented the President, Linda Hall.

Sue Ramser, Secretary, reported a quorum was present.

Sue Ramser, Secretary, read the Standing Rules for the Annual Meeting and they were adopted. A copy is attached to these minutes.

President Hall appointed Sue Hoffmann, Chair, Tom Glembocki and Mary Corondan to approve the 2013 Annual Meeting Minutes. Jeri Anderson was appointed Timekeeper. Patricia Daniel, Mel Grice and Barbara Burde were appointed Tellers. In the absence of Susan Hapner, Chair of the 2012 Committee to Approve, Lynne Wilson reported the minutes of the 2012 Annual Meeting were approved.

Laurene Jones, Resolutions Chairman, presented the Courtesy Resolution, which is attached. The Resolution was adopted.

Laurel Goretsky, Nominating Committee Chair, submitted the following nominations to serve as Directors until the close of the 2016 Annual Meeting: Bob Clark—Washington, Mary Lou Harden—Florida, Susan K. Hill—Kansas, Lorna Russell—Canada, and Joan Santino—Pennsylvania. No nominations were received from the floor.

The Directors were elected by voice vote.

Laurel Goretsky, Nominating Committee Chair, submitted the following nominees to serve as Officers: President—John Carter, First Vice President—Winston Goretsky, Second Vice President—Dr. Richard Nicholas, Third Vice President—Sue Ramser, Secretary—Elmer Godeny, and Treasurer—Edna Rourke. No nominations were received from the floor. The Officers were elected by voice vote.

President Hall announced the Officers and Directors will be installed at the installation banquet this evening.

President Hall recognized the retiring Directors, Barbara Burde, Tom Glembocki, Pat Hancock, Vladimir Kalgin and Terri Post. Also recognized were the retiring Committee Chairs: Linda Owens—Finance, Laurel Goretsky—Nominating, Floyd Lawson—Best Varieties and Honor Roll, Nancy Hayes—Convention Manual, James Rubottom—Internet, Winston Goretsky—Interim Internet Chair, Sue Ramser—Policies & Procedures, John Carter—Salary, Dr. Bill Price—Scholarship and Thelma Miller—Ways and Means. The retiring Directors and Committee Chairs were thanked for their service.

Jaime Anderson, representing Russell Kirchner for Optimara Violets, extended an invitation to attend the 2014 Annual Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. Ms. Anderson also announced that a dinner with Russell Kirchner will be one of the items at the annual auction luncheon.

Kathy Bell, Membership and Promotion Chair, presented the recipients of the annual membership commissions: The Violet Barn—77 new members and Pat Hancock—11 new members.

**Motion #1:** Terri Post, Finance Committee Member, moved on behalf of the Finance Committee that Policies and Procedures Section 7, Q, 1) be changed from: shall approve ALL investments by the treasurer to shall approve ALL investments by the treasurer at the direction of the Executive Committee. Mrs. Post spoke to the motion. The motion was adopted.

No new business came before the Annual Meeting.

Laurene Jones, Resolution Chair, presented the list of deceased members during this year. The following correction was made: Linda Cannel is from Florida. The following were added: Iris Keating—California, Donna Tobin—Minnesota, Georgette Jollivette—Arizona, Henry Volkmann—Texas, Madge Liliquet—California, Roy Pritchard—Washington and Vivian Wise—Florida. A moment of silence was observed. Members were encouraged to notify Mel Grice, Affiliate Chair or Laurene Jones, Resolution Chair of members who are deceased.

The following announcements were made:

Linda Hall thanked the membership for all they do for AVSA. Mrs. Hall thanked Winston Goretsky for being Interim Internet Chair and thanked him for the hours he volunteered on the website project. Mrs. Hall also stated that the website goal had

not been accomplished during her term.

John Carter announced that Barbara Burde has agreed to serve as Internet Chair.

As there was no further business to come before the 2013 Annual Meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM.

---

Sue Ramser, Secretary

#### COMMITTEE TO APPROVE

---

Sue Hoffmann

---

Mary Corondan

---

Tom Glembocki

**Membership Survey**

**AVSA** AFRICAN VIOLET  
SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
**Membership & Promotion**

\*\*\*\*\*

AVSA is collecting information on how African violet growers use information technology. All AVSA members are asked to go online and enter the link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AVM2013>. You may also opt to go to the AVSA website at [www.avsa.org](http://www.avsa.org) and find the link there, as well. The survey is eleven questions long and easy to complete in less than ten minutes. Thank you!

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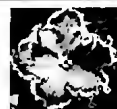
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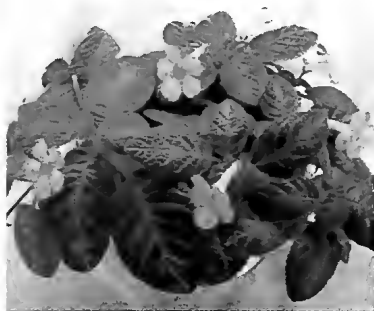
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November • December 2013

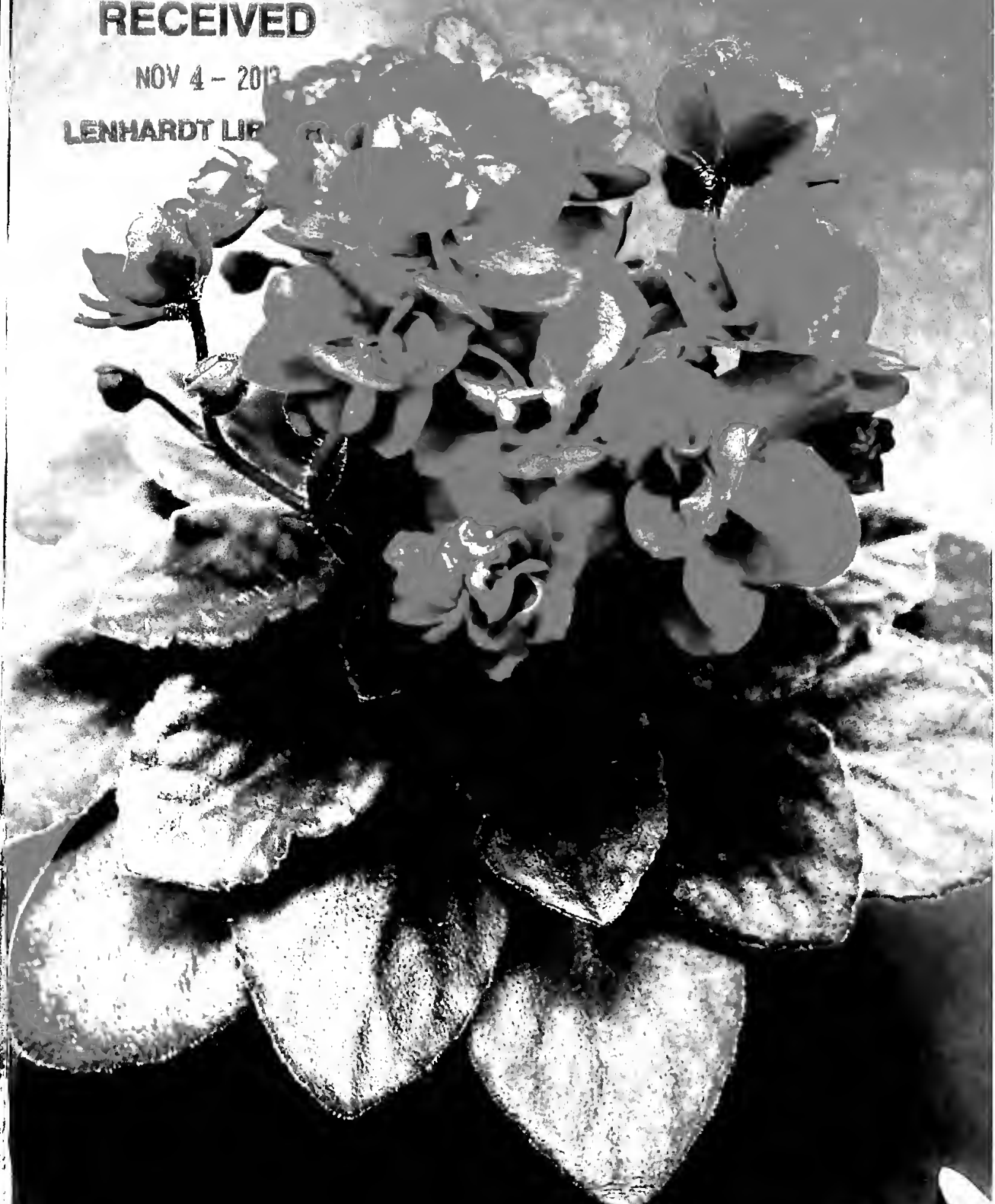
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**MEMBERSHIP CARDS:** Sent to Associate Members. Renewing members receive card on white protective cover of AVM.

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# African Violet

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On this cover:

**Heinz's Stargazer**

Exhibited by: **Debbie McInnis**

Hybridized by: **H. Dornbusch**

Standard

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

# President's Message

By John T. Carter, President

1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

First, I want to thank those who participated in our survey on your use of social media in your pursuit of information about our beloved African violet. At the time of this writing, over 700 persons have completed the online survey. More than fifty percent of the responders use some form of social media daily, primarily Facebook. This is an indication that Facebook may be a way to reach many people in a short period of time. Don't be concerned that this will become a major source of information from AVSA. The *African Violet Magazine* is our primary communication method and will remain so. Our website would be the secondary method. The Facebook and Internet groups can offer a valuable service in spreading information about African violets.

The survey has shown me that we have not been effective in communication with you. We are getting many comments about missing the photos on the AVSA website. However, most of the photos were made available to the public on our website in May. No login required, just click the menu and select the letter of the alphabet for the name you are searching for. The better news is that the Internet Committee is working to have the new website up and running by the time you read this. The photos will be available to everyone. At the time of this writing, the existing website has been down all week. I do not know what the problem is, but it is also delaying work on the new website since they will be hosted on the same server to avoid additional expense.

Enough about problems. At this time, I have plans to attend four of the largest council shows and conventions of the fall season. By the time you read this magazine, all but one will have been held.



I hope that your group had a successful fall event. These events are important for your membership as well as the membership within AVSA. In addition to having an effective membership display table, you need to talk with your visitors about becoming members of your group and AVSA. Offer to put them on your mailing list so you can notify them of your next event, and then follow up.

They will appreciate the personal attention you give them, and if they do not act now they may later. Remember that the membership rates change effective November 1st. Your culture folders still have the old rates on them. You can email our AVSA Office Manager, Amy Carruth, or me, and we can send you a PDF document from which you can print labels to stick onto your inventory of culture folders. Tell us if you need the short form or long form. There is no charge for these files. We will have updated culture folders later this year.

I hope that many of you have seen the DVD from the Austin convention. If you ordered it with your convention registration, you would have received it in September. It is not too late to order it. There is a bonus interview with Ben Haning, the winner of many of the top awards. Looking for a program idea? In fact, you could get several programs from this one DVD.

The last word in the last sentence of this column will be the new password to the Member's section of the AVSA website.

May all of your exhibits be winners!

John



**Happy  
Holidays**

## Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

When I was on vacation a couple of weeks ago, I was pretty certain that the plants in my office would not miss me at all. I had set larger-than-normal water reservoirs under them, and was confident that they would be just fine. Most of them are, but in my haste to get down to the beach, I accidentally left two of the wicks beside the openings leading to the water, instead of inside.

One of the plants is struggling to survive; the other bit the dust before I got back.

Amy and I are looking forward to the 2014 convention in Nashville.

AVSA Member, **Alcie Maxwell**, suggested a few months back that I look into rerunning some



of **David Buttram's** columns, A Closer Look, that focused on the AVSA Commercial Members. I was in the "magazine room" looking through old issues, and I came across David's 1987 interview with Rienhold Holtkamp, Sr. It was at the time when the Holtkamps were building the new, two-acre greenhouse.

I asked Optimara Account Manager and AVSA Member, **Russell Kirchner**, if he had some vintage photos from that time, so I could run them in the AVM with David's original article. You'll find it on pages 58 – 60. I think I'll re-run one of David's columns now and then, so new growers can see where some of those wonderful plants they still grow came from!

*Ruth*

## Luncheon Auction

**Edna Rourke**

99 Old Stratford Road  
Shelton, CT 06484-6129

Can you believe convention time is fast approaching? The "Violet Pickin in Tennessee" convention is sure to be a wonderful one. It's also time to start thinking of the Luncheon Auction. Our past luncheon success has all been due to the very generous donations of our members both amateur and commercial. Let's make this auction truly special, and I know with your help, this will be the best one yet.

We have many generous as well as talented members. I hope you will consider donating a violet-related or craft item to the auction either as an individual member or as a club. These donations make the auction possible. Donations of anything violet related or of a rare, unique, or unusual nature will be gratefully accepted.

APapillon@aol.com  
203-926-9716

To our commercial members, hybridizers both here and abroad, I extend an invitation to donate either supplies or newly introduced plant material. Your donations are always so important to our auction and make for some very lively bidding.

As always, a listing of all donations and contributors will be acknowledged on the luncheon tables.

Please either call or email me and let me know if you plan to make a donation or want to help in some way. I can be reached by: calling 203-926-9716, emailing at the above address. I'd really like to have the opportunity to speak with you.

Many thanks for your continued help and support. Let's make this our best auction ever!

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

See you in Nashville!



# Ammonium Toxicity in Plants

By Kent & Joyce Stork

From their book, *YOU CAN Grow African Violets*

Ammonium toxicity is a condition linked to the use of urea- or ammonium-based fertilizers. The condition has been studied in florists' gloxinias, and we thank Dr. Paul Nelson of North Carolina State University for sharing the results of his studies. He believes that ammonium toxicity does affect African violets as well.

In florists' gloxinias, ammonium toxicity causes lower leaves to curl downward stiffly. The lower leaves will exhibit irregular and highly unpredictable patterns of chlorosis (lighter green patches). The leaf margins of the most mature leaves will be burned, and as the toxicity becomes more pronounced, leaf burning shows up on younger and younger leaves until it affects the crown itself. The plant may die completely. The root structure will be reduced in size and will have an orange-brown tone that is distinctly different from normal root color, which is off-white to pale tan.

Dr. Nelson stated that other plants that have been studied show similar patterns. Ammonium toxicity can have a phantom-like quality. Symptoms may come and go, appearing and disappearing. The extent of the problem can vary in different hybrid strains of one plant type. Since many African violet growers have several hybrids in their collection, it would be expected that the pattern of symptoms would vary from plant to plant.

Ammonium toxicity is generally linked to the use of urea- or ammonium-based fertilizers along with the absence or ineffectiveness of soil bacteria. Active soil bacteria can break ammonia down into a usable nitrate form as long as the soil temperature stays above 70° and as long as the soil pH is 6.0 or above. When soil temperatures cool to below 70° or the pH drops into a more acid

range, soil bacteria becomes progressively less active and less able to process ammonia thoroughly. This results in a build-up to a toxic level.

## How to Control Ammonium Toxicity

If violets are in an area with well-regulated room temperatures that remain in the 70s, and if they do not have an acid water supply, there will probably be no problem. There is certainly no reason to panic if no symptoms are present.

Growers who have seasonally cool temperatures must be aware of how it may affect violets. Do not use the lowest shelves in the growing area during the cool months since the coolest air is always closest to the floor. It may be wise to use less fertilizer since the soil bacteria will be less efficient at processing the ammonia. If possible, warm the room or the tray so that soil temperature does not sink below 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Avoid using cold water to water plants or refill reservoirs. (Hot water is also not acceptable. Do not use water warmer or cooler than ten degrees from the air temperature.)

If there is persistent acid pH in the soil or water that cannot be otherwise controlled, it would be wise to consider using one of the nitrate-based fertilizer products. Read the ingredients on the label. Look for a brand that lists at least one of its sources of nitrogen using the word "nitrate" These brands will not add the excess ammonia to the soil, and their nitrates are not so dependent upon soil bacteria for breakdown.

All that having been said, if ammonium toxicity is suspected, you should first try leaching the soil. Once recognized, ammonium toxicity should be easy to control and avoid. Best of all, the treatment is inexpensive and safe.





Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Buckeye Sketch Artist*

*Exhibited by: Ben Haning*

*Hybridized by: P. Hancock*

*Large*

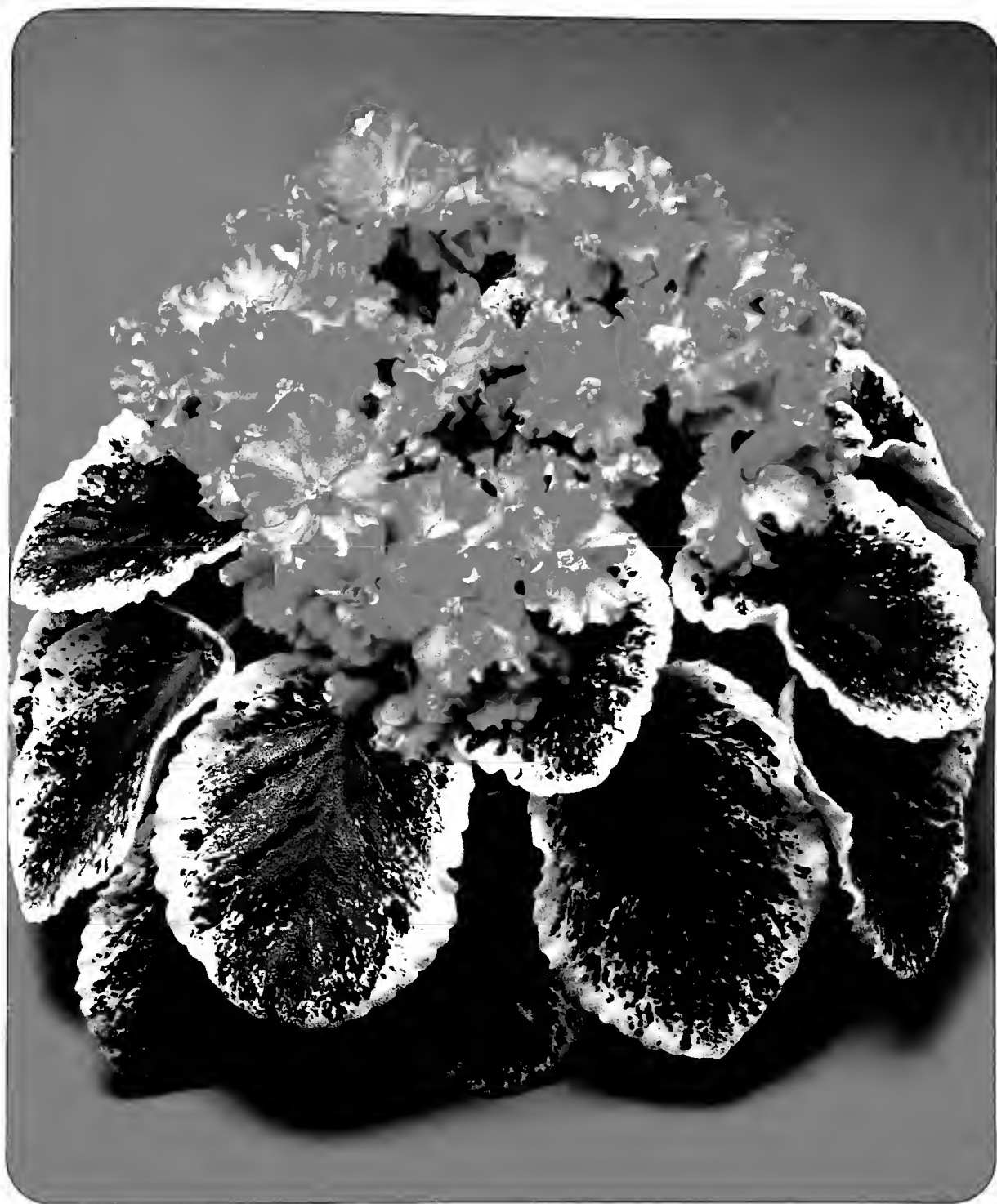


Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Natural Rose Gem*

*Exhibited by: BJ Ohme*

*Hybridized by: N. Levine*

*Standard*

# In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

Many of you reading this column may have participated in a recent survey from the African Violet Society of America asking about various ways to direct the future of the organization. One of the items under discussion is the use of social media and other electronic forms of communication. Whatever your viewpoint on this form of communication, I would like to point out a resource that is available on the web.

Adrienne "Annie" Rieck has put together a series of short video lessons or podcasts from her home (and other locations) on various aspects of growing African violets. Her site is called "All about African Violets" and can be found at <http://allaboutafricanviolets.com/>. Over 60 episodes have been recorded so far on a large variety of growing topics, AVSA shows, and interviews with growers and hybridizers. The site has an index for searching out specific topics. Annie's site is an excellent example of how electronic information is now being utilized, and I think you'll find the information informative as well as entertaining.

**Q:** *I'd like to hybridize a trailer with variegated foliage similar to 'Ma's Corsage' or 'Ann'. Do you have any suggestions on what to use for parents in the cross?*

**A:** Both 'Ma's Corsage' and 'Ann' have wide bands of the Tommie Lou variegation type on their leaf margins. Both also have ruffled foliage. I presume that your goal is to have a trailer with ruffled foliage with a wide band of variegation on the leaf edges. Tommie Lou variegation is inherited maternally through the seed parent. As long as the seed parent shows this type of variegation, most of the seedlings should also inherit the trait. This trait will be easy to pass on in your cross.

Ruffled foliage is a dominant genetic trait. Most plants with ruffled foliage are heterozygous or have only one copy of the trait. Plants that are homozy-



gous or have two copies are rare as the foliage is extra ruffled and very unmanageable. Assuming that a ruffled foliage plant is heterozygous, about half of the offspring should inherit the trait. This will be another easy trait to pass on in your cross.

The hard part of your cross will be getting a trailer. In order to make the foliage stand out, I'd suggest you use a semi-mini trailer or standard trailer.

This would give wider bands of white variegation on the leaves than you would likely get on a miniature trailer. I'd also look for a trailer with extra long stems or "trails" to get a possibility of a trailer in the first generation. Chances are that the first generation or F1 plants will be bushy ones that don't trail that much. However, backcrossing the F1 plants with the variegation and ruffled foliage back to the trailer parent should produce better trailing plants in the next generation while conserving the foliage traits you want.

If you are not particular about flower color, you might consider using one of the trailing species clones such as Mather No. 21 or *grotei* as your trailing parent. They have the long trails you need and should give you good foliage results in the F1 generation. However, the blue flower color of the species will be dominant, and all of your F1 plants will have blue/purple flowers. If you want other flower colors, use plants with flower colors other than blue or purple.

**Q:** *Can ruffled flowers be produced on trailers?*

**A:** Ruffled flowers are a dominant genetic trait and often linked with ruffled foliage. I don't see why ruffled flowers couldn't be added to a trailer hybridization effort. Just include one parent with ruffled flowers in your cross, and at least 50% of the offspring should show the trait. The previous question with the ruffled foliage has an excellent

chance of also adding ruffled flowers to the offspring in the same cross.

***Q: Why do trailers have smaller flowers? Is it possible to put the large showy flowers of the Russian hybrids on a trailer?***

**A:** Your observation that trailers tend to have smaller flowers seems to be accurate. Most trailers do have smaller, but numerous flowers. I suspect that smaller numerous flowers and the trailing growth form were inherited together from the species plants. The two traits might not be genetically linked, but I think hybridizers have always selected for plants with high flower counts in order to fully cover the larger area of foliage in a trailer.

Off-hand, I don't see a reason why trailers couldn't be bred for larger flowers. There may be a question of how the plant can split up its energy, and I think there will be a compromise between numerous smaller flowers or just a few larger flowers. I'm not sure the plant will have the energy to support a large number of very large flowers. However, until we try, we won't know for sure. If you are looking for a hybridizing challenge, consider working for trailers with larger flowers, and let's see what can be developed.

***Q: Why do plants with light green foliage and bicolor flowers often sport to darker foliage and solid colored flowers?***

**A:** Your observation that plants with light green foliage and bicolor flowers sporting to darker foliage and solid colored flowers is certainly an accurate one. Many examples of this mutation are known. Sometimes the new plant is kept and named; however, many often feel that the darker foliaged plant is not really an improvement on the original. I've even seen examples where the crown mutated and one side of the plant had light green leaves and bicolored flowers and the other half had dark green leaves and solid colored flowers. Some of the leaves and flowers were 50:50 or some other percentage of mixture. This splitting produces some very unusual plants at times.

I'm not sure I can explain "why" this happens. I suspect that the pigment systems for both leaves and foliage have changed due to some change in gene regulation early in the pigment expression pathways. Exactly what changed, I don't know. One could speculate that the wild type or "normal" for African violets is to have dark green foliage and solid colored flowers. The mutation is the change that reduces the amount of pigment giving the light green foliage and bicolored flowers. The mutation is obviously "unstable" given the incidence of reversion back to the wild type. Scientists have been finding all kinds of interesting new mechanisms for gene expression control such as enhancers, RNAi and siRNA. Which mechanism or mechanisms are involved with this event is unknown for now.

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## Spreading the Word at the Local Level

By Kathy Bell <bellkk@peoplepc.com>

Here's another way to reach out to your community, to spark interest in African violets, your local affiliate club, and AVSA.

Seek out an invitation to speak to other clubs and organizations.

Talk to Garden Clubs throughout your community, as well as women's groups, schools, college organizations, Girl/Boy Scouts, and senior groups, etc.

Participate in general garden sales at churches, neighborhood activity centers, and if there are Gar-

den Home Tours in your area, handout information on your club and AVSA. Getting out in the community helps spread the word about your club and the African Violet Society.

I am curious to know how many of you already reach out to your community by speaking or participating in some manner at other horticulture club meetings, community events, school programs, etc. I would also like to hear your thoughts on the best places to advertise a local club. I want to hear what has worked for you!



*Photo Credit: Bob Kurzynski*

## *Jersey Jackpot*

*Grown & Hybridized by: Bob Kurzynski*

*Miniature*



# Question Box

By Sue Haffner

3015 Timmy Ave. • Clovis, CA 93612

Email: [sueh@csufresno.edu](mailto:sueh@csufresno.edu) • [haff.sue2@gmail.com](mailto:haff.sue2@gmail.com)

Dear Friends,

I hope you and your violets had a good year these past months. Some of us suffered through terrible heat waves over last summer but, with luck, our indoor plants came through it without damage—though the same cannot be said of outdoor plants. Prolonged heat can stress even the toughest varieties. Always look forward to spring, I say!



At a club workshop, we got into our usual discussion: where to get perlite that was good-sized and not full of fines. One member said she dropped by one of the hydroponic businesses that have cropped up around here in recent years. (Yes, we know their chief customers are involved with plants much different than those we grow.) She found that they stocked high quality perlite of various sizes as well as other growing supplies. She said we shouldn't be shy about patronizing such businesses, as the young guys who worked there were very cordial toward the "old lady."

In my previous column, I dealt with a question about why African violet blossoms appear to sparkle. I rattled on about how the cellular structure of the blossom may have evolved to aid in insect pollination. Well, Dr Jeff Smith provided a much more basic answer: the cells of the blossoms are dome or bubble shaped and reflect light in all directions, hence the "sparkle." Thanks, Jeff!

***Q. I was reading an article in the AVM about fertilizers. I found and bought a 15-30-15 fertilizer to help me with more blooms. The one I got is MiracleGro Bloom Booster Flower Food which says to use 1 Tbs. of the MiracleGro per gallon of water. Is this mixture okay for the African violets? Or should it be reduced?***

***A:*** This application rate seems more appropriate for garden plants. I see that the manufacturer recommends you use 1 tsp per gallon of water for indoor plants, but I would think ¼ tsp per gallon for violets would be advised. More is usually not better when it comes to fertilizers. (By the way, I hope you are all reading Neil Lipson's articles in the AVM. His "Fertilizers—tips, tricks, and tweaks" in the July-August 2013 issue is very interesting.)

***Q. How long do African violets live? I ask because my mom gave me some plants years ago that she had grown from seed. She had been surprised to see African violet seeds offered in the catalog from where she ordered garden seeds (this must have been back in the 1960s or 70s.) She bought some, planted them, and got several dozen little violets. She grew them, on for years and then gave some to me. I want to keep the plants going, even though they're just ordinary lavender pansies, and I have been propagating them from leaves. Also, do African violets change over the years? I ask because just recently I noticed that on one of the plants the blossoms are showing some white streaks. Other than that, it seems okay.***

***A:*** Gosh, plants from the 1960s or 70s would be over 40 years old, providing they had been continually groomed and repotted. I do know of individuals who have kept particular plants going for decades, usually for sentimental reasons—that it had been a gift, for instance. One violet I saw had been trained on a trellis (it was not actually a trailer), but the lady who grew it was very proud of it, and it was in full bloom, so who was I to say she should cut off the rosette and re-root it? I think it's admirable that you are keeping your mother's violets going. As to



the white streaks in the blossom: this could be a 'sport.' African violets have been heavily hybridized, and it is not at all unusual for a 'sport' to show up after generations of stable growth. Keep track of this particular plant and note whether or not it continues to produce streaked blossoms. Put down a few leaves from it and see what sort of blooms show up on the resulting plants.

*Q. Mary, from Long Island, sent me an email that included four photos of violets which were not growing normally. Three of the photos showed plants with crowns of miniaturized leaves; the other photo was of 'Pretty 'n Pink' with a congested center that was suggestive of mites, over-fertilization, or too much heat and/or light. She wanted to know what the heck caused this and how she could avoid this in the future.*

*A:* In the case of the miniaturized centers, the current consensus is that this is a result of a toxic build-up of a micro-nutrient brought about probably by interactions between the fertilizer and water the grower has been using. When the center leaves get tiny like, that the process is usually irreversible. I would take some leaves and discard the plant. The grower should also check the pH of her water in order to avert this continuing to happen. More frequent repotting might help, as well. The plant of 'Pretty 'n Pink' might have a different issue. I would isolate it from the other plants first, put it in a different light situation, and see if that makes a difference. Ronn Nadeau has two articles in the July-August 2013 issue about Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus (INSV), and he includes photos of plants with stunted centers that, truthfully, resemble Mary's plant. Still, I don't feel qualified to deliver such a dire diagnosis. I would try to rule out other, cultural, causes first.

*Q. My plants are not doing well; the blooms are sickly looking and are dropping pollen. What could be the problem?*

*A:* Dropping pollen always suggests thrips to me. Other signs of thrips are streaks on blossoms or fo-

liage where the bugs have been feeding. This can be a difficult pest to combat. You could try a systemic insecticide and keep your plants disbudded. Thrips feed on pollen during a certain time of their life cycle and can spread diseases, including INSV. Still, violets infested with thrips can look just fine—right up to the moment when the thrips reveal themselves, so I'm not entirely sure what "sickly looking" means in this question. Sometimes pollen falls from mature blossoms naturally. There might be something else going on here. I would disbud, re-pot, isolate, and see if these procedures make a difference. If they don't, I would consider whether the plant was worth keeping.

*Q. I was talking to my neighbor about plants. He's been growing things for a long time and really has a green thumb (he doesn't grow violets, though.) Anyway, I mentioned thrips to him and he suggested I use mothballs to combat them, said I should put a dish of mothballs on the plant shelf. I hadn't thought of that. What do you think?*

*A:* Mothballs seem like such a familiar item, even though we may not use them as often as people did years ago. Because they are familiar, it is easy to think that they are safe, but they are not. Most of the mothballs you find for sale are naphthalene. They are made to be used in closed, airtight containers to kill clothes moths and other fabric pests. Their fumes can be dangerous, not for thrips, but for you. The EPA lists naphthalene as a possible human carcinogen. Always read the directions when you bring any sort of chemical into your home. For thrips, do your homework, consider all the options, check articles in the AVM or the AVSA website FAQ list. Whatever you do, don't use mothballs outside in your garden, as they can be dangerous to children, pets, and beneficial wildlife.

*Q. One of my fellow club members said that she got some kind of skin rash from handling her gesneriads. I'd never heard of such a thing. Is it possible? I've never heard of any-*

*one being allergic to African violets.*

A: Plants have evolved a number of means of self-defense. Unlike our "fight or flight" strategy, plants can't flee, so they have to use whatever they can to deter browsers. Among these is the production of volatile compounds designed to repel invaders. Yes, I have heard of growers who had reactions of varying severity from particular gesneriads, varieties of *Streptocarpus* and *Nautilocalyx*, especially. There was a recent discussion of this online. On the other hand, I haven't heard of anyone having an allergic reaction to *Saintpaulia*. One person may be sensitive to a chemical compound found in the leaves of a particular plant while

others are not bothered by it. Or, this compound may only be present at certain times, such as when the foliage is broken or cut. Sometimes an allergic reaction can be a one-time thing. Still other people have a list of plants that they cannot grow or handle anymore, lest they wind up with dermatologic problems. I remember vividly in high school science class when the teacher was passing around some leaves of the Oregon Myrtle (a Bay Laurel) and one girl broke out instantly in huge, red hives. That was a powerful reaction. So if you should feel itchy after working with your plants, don't totally ignore it. Make a note of which plant you were handling and be careful with it in the future.



## The New AVSA Website

Barbara Burde, AVSA Internet Committee Chairman

By now, I hope that all AVSA members have seen the new website. The Internet Committee has put a lot of thought, planning, and hard work into trying to bring you a website that is attractive and useful. Numerous AVSA Committees and Committee Chairmen have contributed their ideas to the website, and we thank them for their help. We appreciate the patience that everyone has accorded us as we have done this work. While we have tried to ensure that all the essentials were on the website at the time it was launched, there were quite a few other areas that were not quite ready. In the interest of having this new website as soon as possible (everyone was eager to have a new website!), the decision was made to launch the new website without all the features planned. By the time you read this, you will probably have already seen some changes.

Everyone should thoroughly explore the website to learn where different information is located. If you are having difficulty finding something, be sure to use the Search on the Home Page.

New to the website is information on the AVSA Library, plant registration, and the various AVSA funds that you may want to support. There is now a functioning members' login for access to information of interest to members. The list of known AV sports has returned (hoorah!), and there is more culture information in Violets 101. We are especially pleased to now have online submission forms, particularly for coming events and show reports.

Our biggest disappointment has been the slow pace of getting all the photos on view in the photo gallery. The photos are all in our data base, but processing them to get each photo with plant name into the gallery has proven to be slow and tedious. We will be continuing this job. Yet to come will be a method for members to submit their photos to be included on the website.

We are planning additional information in some areas and more photos throughout. And, of course, all the exciting Nashville Convention information will be coming in January.

Please complete the online survey about the new website – we truly appreciate your feedback!



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

## *Little Blue Bandit*

*Exhibited by: Kathy Lahti*

*Hybridized by: P. Sorano/ Llyon Greenhouses*

*Miniature*



*Rob's  
Miriwinni*  
Exhibited by:  
*Glenda Williams*  
*Semiminiature Trailer*

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky



*Rob's Loose  
Noodle*

Exhibited by:  
*Ken Froboese*  
*Miniature*

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

# AVSA Library Message

Anne Nicholas, Library Chairman

The 2015 AVSA Convention and Show was breathtaking. It was great to see over 1,000 exhibits in the showroom and to hear outstanding presentations.

The Library Committee was pleased to introduce a new DVD at the convention. This new DVD, Meet the Commercials, was a huge hit! It is the first AVSA Library production to include video footage. The DVD features six of our AVSA commercial vendors. We get to see their growing spaces and hear personal stories of how they got started in violets. Andrea Worrell was the moving force behind the production of this new product. Andrea and Tom and Libbie Glembocki provided the video footage. Joe Bruns helped Andrea assemble all the pieces into a wonderful program. Andrea and Tom introduced the DVD at a presentation in Austin. The program was dynamic, and sales of the DVD were brisk. If you do not yet have this DVD for

yourself or your club program, visit the AVSA website and order a copy.

Many folks also ordered copies of the Austin Convention DVD. This product shows photos and describes all the winning entries. It is a great way to either re-visit the showroom or see it for the first time if you missed it. The Convention DVD is always a popular one to share at club meetings, or with friends. It can also be ordered through the AVSA website.

The Library Committee, as always, was busy, and enjoyed every moment seeing friends, the sales room, and, of course, the showroom. Many thanks go to the fantastic hardworking members of the Library Committee. This committee includes: Barbara Burde, Marjorie Bullard, Janet Castiglione, Libbie Glembocki, Tom Glembocki, Richard Nicholas, and Andrea Worrell. The group looks forward to a great show next year in Nashville, TN.



## Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

Janet Riemer

256 Pennington-Harbourton Rd. • Pennington, NJ 08534

July 1 – August 30, 2013 • Total: \$134.00



### Two-tone

Long Island African Violet Society

*In memory of Dolores O'Sullivan*

New Jersey Council of African Violet Judges

*In memory of Kay Rotando*

*In memory of Gerry Brenner*

Morgan Simmons



### Thumbprint

Christopher J. Beney

Marcia Sunderman

Caroline Storey

Kris Johnson

**Mark Your Calendar!**

**2014 AVSA Convention in Nashville, TN**

**May 25 – June 1**



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## *Zhemchuzhnye Zverdy*

*Exhibited by: Catherine Thompson*

*Hybridized by: E. Arkhipov*

*Standard*



# "Tips from Convention Winners"

## Part 1

By Paula Bal

The past Convention in Austin, Texas, was spectacular. Observing the gorgeous show plants being carefully carried into Entries and Classifications was a sight to behold. When Ben Haning entered with his fifty or more plants, it was obvious there would be more than a few prize winners among them. This was reminiscent of Best in Show winner, Sandy Skalski, entering her prize winning plants at the Philadelphia Convention. Sure enough, one of Ben's trailer's, Rob's Galiwinku, took Best in Show among many other prizes. So, how do Convention winners do it? What are the secrets to their success? Ben graciously shared his growing tips with me shortly after the Convention.

The "violet bug" bit Ben twenty five years ago after he received an African Violet from his wife for their one month wedding anniversary. His collection grew rapidly after building his first light stand. He stocked it with Volkmann plants and local club sale plants. He grew for a few years, but after having children, his collection dwindled to a couple of windowsill plants for the next twenty-two years. He began growing again three years ago after a good friend gave him a free Floracart. He started stocking it with plants again from local shows. He met Bill Foster shortly after when he took a problem plant to a local African Violet show to be diagnosed. Bill encouraged Ben to join the Dallas First Nighter Club. Ben was lucky to have some great teachers in the Dallas Club: Mary Corondan, Meredith Hall, Bill Foster and Hortense Pittman, just to name a few. There he was inspired to enter his first show.

Ben now has one Floracart at home and two Floracarts and two homemade stands at his Veterinary Clinic. He grows mainly under T-8 lamps, but a few fixtures have T-12's. In each fixture, he has one cool white lamp and one wide spectrum lamp. The lamps are spaced eleven

inches apart; however, some are six inches apart. The lamps are eight to twelve inches above the foliage for standards and trailers. Miniatures and semi-miniatures are six to eight inches away from the lamps. The lights are on ten to eleven hours per day all year. He does not increase the light time prior to shows.

Ben's potting mix is three parts Sunshine Mix LA4 and one part coarse perlite for all his plants; no other additives are used. Acrylic yarn is used to wick each pot. Coarse perlite is then added to the bottom of each pot. Sunshine/perlite mix is added when potting up, or repotting the plant.

Watering is done with a mixture of half tap water and half reverse osmosis water. The water's pH is tested using the "pour through" method as listed in Pauline Bartholomew's Growing to Show. Ben's tap water has a pH of 8.0. After adding ¼ tsp of DynaGro 7-9-5 to one gallon of the water mixture, the water's pH drops to 6.6. The potting mix's pH is 6.6 as well.

The temperature is 75 degrees during the daytime and nighttime at his home. At his office, temperatures range from 72 degrees during the day and 68 degrees at night.

Trailers, semi-miniatures, and miniatures are sometimes allowed to bloom, but standards are disbudded constantly, until six to eight weeks before the show.

Ben's fertilizer regimen is simple; he uses DynaGro 7-9-5 at ¼ tsp and one drop of Superthrive per gallon at every watering. He does not foliar feed as recommended in Growing to Show. Plants are all watered on capillary matting; cheap acrylic blankets are used over an egg crate in the bottom of each tray. Weed Block fabric is used over the blankets to decrease algae growth on the matting. The matting is washed twice a year. Plants are watered once a week and are allowed to dry out for one to two days before watering again.

Grooming is done months in advance before the show. Miniatures and semi-miniatures are broken down to two or three triangles of growth to keep them from overgrowing their size categories. Standards are groomed back about ten to twelve inches in diameter, three to four months prior to the show. The trailers are stripped back to leave a small rosette on each runner six months prior to the show. After the show, plants are broken down and repotted. Repotting is done every three to four months.

Ben's favorite growing tool is a dull pencil, which he uses to disbud and groom his plants, remove suckers, buds, and immature leaves.

He uses Marathon granules in each pot, each time he repots, at the recommended dosage to control soil mealy bugs. Myclobutanil is used to

control powdery mildew twice a year. Avid and Conserve SC are used as needed to control thrips and spider mites. Ben finds that thrips are difficult to control due to the large amount of pets coming in and out of Ben's home and vet clinic. Ben theorizes that thrips enter most growers' collections in this fashion.

Consistency of lighting, fertilizer, pH, watering, as well as attention to grooming, repotting, and inspection for insects are keys to Ben's success.

Thank you, Ben, for taking time out of your busy schedule to share your helpful tips for growing prize-winning plants. Kathy Lahti, winner of the Detroit Convention, and Sandy Skalski, winner of the Philadelphia Convention, will be featured in "Tips from Convention Winners" Part 2 and 3 in future magazines.

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## AVSA Affiliate Update

Mel Grice, Affiliates Chairman

The Affiliates' meeting at the 2013 Austin convention was well attended and much information was shared among the seventy-two AVSA members in attendance. Lynn Lombard, Dale Martens, Kathy Bell, Glenda Williams, and Annie Rieck spoke briefly on various ideas that have proven successful for their local clubs. Numerous audience members also shared success stories from their personal experiences. Make plans to attend the Affiliates' meeting next year in Nashville!

Have you noticed that the former AFFILIATES section of the AVSA website is now labeled LOCAL CLUBS thanks to suggestions from several members? The number of people requesting information about joining AVSA clubs has greatly increased since the change was made. Also, each state name is now listed instead of the former regional designations. Please feel free to make further suggestions that will make the website information more easily accessible.

I was recently contacted by a lady who had moved to a different state and city and was looking for an AV club to join. There were two AV clubs in her city listed on the website. She was very frustrated because no one from either club had responded to her requests for information about

joining a club. It turned out that the contact information listed on the website was way out of date, and they did not receive her emails. I can not stress enough how important it is to keep your website information updated. None of our AV clubs can afford to miss contacting potential new members. Please send me periodic updates to keep your AVSA website information current.

***Speaking of new members — This new local club is forming:***

The **Southern Colorado Violet Society** is an enthusiastic, non-profit group of people with members from the Colorado Springs and surrounding area. If you would like to learn new things about African Violets, other gesneriads, and meet new people that share an interest in these plants and how to grow them, please plan on joining us!

Bring your African violet-loving friends along! We meet in August, October, December, February, April, and June on Saturdays at 1 p.m.

For more information: Please contact **Peggy Barber**, President, at (719) 233-8623.

Email: [peggylovesplants@msn.com](mailto:peggylovesplants@msn.com)

Facebook Group "Southern Colorado Violet Society"

# A Family Portrait

By Mel Grice

2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, OH

Email: <melsgrice@earthlink.net

## Kohleria 'Pink Shadows'

*Kohleria* 'Pink Shadows' is an example of one of my favorite gesneriads. Hot pink speckled tubular flowers make a nice contrast with the very dark, almost black fuzzy leaves. John Boggan created this floriferous hybrid. *Kohleria* 'Pink Shadows' comes from the cross *Kohleria amabilis* (var. *amabilis*) x *Kohleria* 'Tropical Night'. *Kohleria* 'Pink Shadows' is a descendant of his *Kohleria* 'Dark Shadows.'

Scaly rhizomes are produced under the soil and above the soil coming from leaf axils when conditions are favorable. Scaly rhizomes often resemble pine cones and help the plants remain alive during the dry season in the wild. They perform the same function as a tuber or bulb so DO NOT discard the pot if the plant looks dead — it is only resting or dormant.

A crucial factor in rhizome production is keeping the plants consistently well fed and watered. If excess drying occurs too early in the growth cycle, the plants may go dormant prematurely without producing any rhizomes for next year. That is why I try to have two or more pots of a variety growing so that I won't lose the variety if I occasionally forget to water a tray of plants. I try to place each pot in a different part of my plant room so that they are wa-



tered on different days. Most *Kohlerias* do not have a required dormancy period like some gesneriads do. If pruned back to the soil level after flowering, they usually will sprout again immediately if they have made new scaly rhizomes. Thus, they can be kept going throughout the year with the proper light and warmth levels.

The spectacular plant shown in the photo was grown by Ben Paternoster of Long Island, New York. He said, "I have had this *Kohleria* in this container for many years. The many rhizomes sprout, grow to maturity, get tired looking, and I eventually cut it back to the soil level.

The cycle repeats. The cycle that resulted in the plant pictured was different. Usually, the new growth from the many rhizomes varies resulting in various plant heights and bloom times. This time everything came together at the same time to produce a specimen in which



Photo Credit by Paul Susi

the growth from the many rhizomes produced a uniform mound shape and distribution of bloom. How did I achieve this? It has never happened for me before. I did nothing different. I will, however, give some credit to this particular John Boggan hybrid. It has a compact habit that increases the probability that this *Kohleria* might produce this result. Other than that, it was pure luck!"



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## *Mariah*

*Exhibited by: Ben Haning*

*Hybridized by: D. Harrington*

*Standard*

# "And the winners are ..."

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

By Mary J. Corondan

Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

**BERGEN COUNTY AVS, NJ –**  
**Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Jersey Snow Flakes, Ode To Beauty. EK-Goluboglazaia Rossiia; Best in Show/Best Standard: Jersey Snow Flakes; Best Semiminiature: Ness' Angel Glitter; Best Miniature: Precious Pixie. Horticulture Sweepstakes, Barbara Church. Best Trailer: Pixie Blue; Best Design, Lee Borey. Best Gesneriad: Streptocarpus 'Night Beacon', Ruth Murphy.



Chilly Willy; Best Trailer: Jersey Rose Trail; Best Species: Saintpaulia 5b clone grotei Silvert; Horticulture Sweepstakes, Bob Kurzynski. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Ness' Cranberry Swirl, Mac's Misty Meadow; Best Gesneriad: Streptocarpus 'Lavender Rosette', Jill Fisher. Best Design, Karyn Cichocki. Design Sweepstakes, Emilia Rykowski.

**DES MOINES EVENING AV CLUB, IA –**  
**Winners:** Best in Show/Best Standard: Strawberry Wave, Wayne Watts. Best Semiminiature: Ness' Crinkle Blue; Design Sweepstakes, Kathy Mathews. Best Trailer: Honeysuckle Rose, Tina Cook. Best Gesneriad: Streptocarpus 'Spin Art', Stephanie Renner. Best Design, Suzy Mathews.

**MORRIS COUNTY AVC, NJ –**  
**Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Jersey Snow Flakes, Jersey Snow Drops, Rebel's Splatter Kake; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Pink Buttercups, Irish Flirt, Eternal Orbit; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature; Best Standard: Heinz's Sentimental; Best Miniature: Rob's

**PARMATOWN AVC, OH –**  
**Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Frozen in Time, Ma's Glass Slipper, Ode to Beauty; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Shirl's Hawaiian Lei, Rob's Chilly Willy, Optimara Rose Quartz; Best Standard: Ode to Beauty; Best Miniature: Optimara Rose Quartz; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Martha Bell**. Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Rob's Boogie Woogie, **Tracy Lorence**. Best Trailer: Rocky Mountain Trail, **Pat Schreiber**. Best Species: Saintpaulia pendula var. kizare, **Linda Neumann**. Best Gesneriad: Kohleria 'Manchu', **Mark Occhionero**. Best Design/Design Sweepstakes, Rick and Cheri Pogozelski.

## BOYCE EDENS RESEARCH FUND

Marlene J. Buck • 17235 N. 106th Avenue • Sun City, AZ 85373-1958

Donations received from: June 1, 2013 – July 31, 2013

Total = \$ 255.00



### Multicolor

Saintpaulia Society of Long Island, NY  
*In memory of Kathryn (Kay) Rotando,*  
*president of SSLI*  
 Vancouver African Violet and Gesneriad  
 Society, Vancouver BC

Saintpaulia Society of Long Island, NY  
*In honor of Judges at 2013 Spring Show*  
*Margaret Califano, Marilyn Heinrich, Diane*  
*Lohan, Rosemary Macaluso, Dorothy*  
*Raymond, Dorothy Vogt*



### Two-Tone

First Nighter AVS of Dallas, TX  
 Metropolitan Regional Council of  
 African Violet Judges, NY  
*In memory of Kathryn (Kay) Rotando,*  
*member and past president*



### Thumbprint

Betsy Branson, Sellersville, PA  
 Dariane Joshlin, Fountain Hills, AZ  
*In memory of Georgette Jolivet*  
 Nancy Loeb, de Leon, TX  
 Marvin Nester, Lakeland, FL



# AVSA's BEST VARIETY LIST FOR 2013

Floyd Lawson • 2019 Madrona Ave. • Torrance, CA 90503

*FloydLL@earthlink.net*

Welcome to AVSA's 2013 Best Variety List. Thank you to all who participated by regular mail and e-mail. The response again spanned the world. Even though I cannot answer each one, your comments and support are deeply appreciated. I recognize the time and effort each of you give to this list.

Again this year, we list each of the top twenty-five favorites with their descriptions from AVSA's First Class computer data base. Many have asked about species and the List. Yes, species are counted. The top species this year were variations of *S. ionantha grotei*. Now to YOUR choices for the past year. Read the list, read the descriptions, and choose your new favorite for your collection.

**Picasso** (6924) 10/04/1988 (M. Tremblay) Double light blue and white/variable white fantasy. Variegated medium green, plain/silver-green back. Large

**Frozen in Time** (9167) 02/03/2003 (Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano) Single-semidouble white star/variable lavender tinge; green edge. Variegated light green and ivory, quilted. Standard

**Ness' Crinkle Blue** (8136) 01/19/1995 (D. Ness) Double dark blue star/thin white edge. Dark green, quilted, serrated/red back. Semiminature

**Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler** (8745) 07/27/1998 (P. Hancock) Semidouble bright pink ruffled pansy/variable raspberry fantasy; raspberry edge. Variegated dark green, cream and pink, plain, glossy/red back. Large (DAVS 1621)

**Irish Flirt** (7577) 11/07/1991 (S. Sorano) Double bright green and white frilled star. Medium green, wavy. Semiminature

**Harbor Blue** (6174) 02/24/1986 (T. Weber) Single light blue/darker eye. Dark green, plain/red back. Large

**Orchard's Bumble Magnet** (8479) 08/21/1996 (R. Wilson) Double pink star. Medium green, plain, pointed. Miniature

**Rainbow's Quiet Riot** (R. Wasmund) Semidouble blue-purple large star/white fantasy. Dark green, round, scalloped. Standard

**Milky Way Trail** (7169) 08/01/1989 (J. Stahl) Single-semidouble white pansy. Medium green, heart-shaped, quilted. Semiminature trailer

**Precious Red** (9724) 01/15/2007 (H. Pittman) Semidouble-double dark red pansy. Dark green, plain/red back. Miniature

**Pixie Blue** (2598) 09/16/1974 (L. Lyon) Single purple-blue/darker center. Dark green, plain/red back. Miniature

**The Alps** (7813) 10/03/1992 (K. Horikoshi/H. Sawara) Single semidouble chimera white pansy/light blue stripe. Medium green, plain, quilted. Standard

**Cirelda** (3620) 03/07/1979 (P. Tracey) Double pink two-tone. Quilted. Semiminature trailer

**Shirl's Hawaiian Lei** (9372) 09/30/2004 (S. Sanders) Single purple pansy/white eye. Variegated medium green and white, heart shaped. Miniature

**Powwow** (7708) 06/15/1992 (K. Stork) Semidouble red pansy. Variegated green and cream, plain. Standard

**Plumberry Glow** (9187) 02/03/2003 (Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano) Semiminature. Single white sticktite pansy/plum patches. Variegated medium green and cream, heart-shaped. Semiminature

**Rob's Chilly Willy** (9461) 07/30/2005 (R. Robinson) Double silver-white star/medium blue overlay, edge. Crown variegated medium green and white, pointed. Miniature

**Rob's Combustible Pigeon** (9462) R. Robinson (07/30/2005) Semiminature. Semidouble pink pansy/blue fantasy/white edge. Crown variegated medium green, yellow and white plain, serrated. Semiminature

**Persian Prince** (8266) S. Serano (07/28/1995) Miniature. Semidouble medium blue pansy. Medium green, ovate scalloped girl foliage. Miniature



**Blue Dragon** (9516) 12/17/2005 (Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/P. Sorano) Double light blue large filled star/raspberry edge. Dark green, plain/red back. Large

**Jolly Orchid** (9719) 01/15/2007 (H. Pittman) Double orchid and white pansy. Medium green, plain, quilted. Miniature

**Ness' Cranberry Swirl** (8135) 01/19/1995 (D. Ness) Double white star/variable fuchsia edge. Variegated green and cream, plain, pointed; sucker propagation. Semiminiature

**Optimara Rose Quartz** (6969) 11/19/1988 (Holtkamp) Single-semidouble pink. Medium green, ovate, pointed, glossy, hairy. Miniature

**Rob's Fuddy Duddy** (7886) 06/02/1993 (R. Robinson) Semidouble dark mauve-purple stick-tite pansy. Dark green, quilted. Semiminiature

**Rebel's Splatter Kake** (8695) 01/31/1998 (R. Bann) Single-semidouble pink large fluted star/darker eye, purple fantasy, white green edge. Medium green spooned, quilted, glossy, serrated/red back. Large

We welcome our new columnist, **Jennie Lawrence**, who will be sharing information about our favorite plants and the Internet, in her column, "**The Violet Network**." Find her first column on page 35 in this issue.



## *Pixie Runaround*

*Exhibited by:*

*Anne Nicholas*

*Hybridized by:*

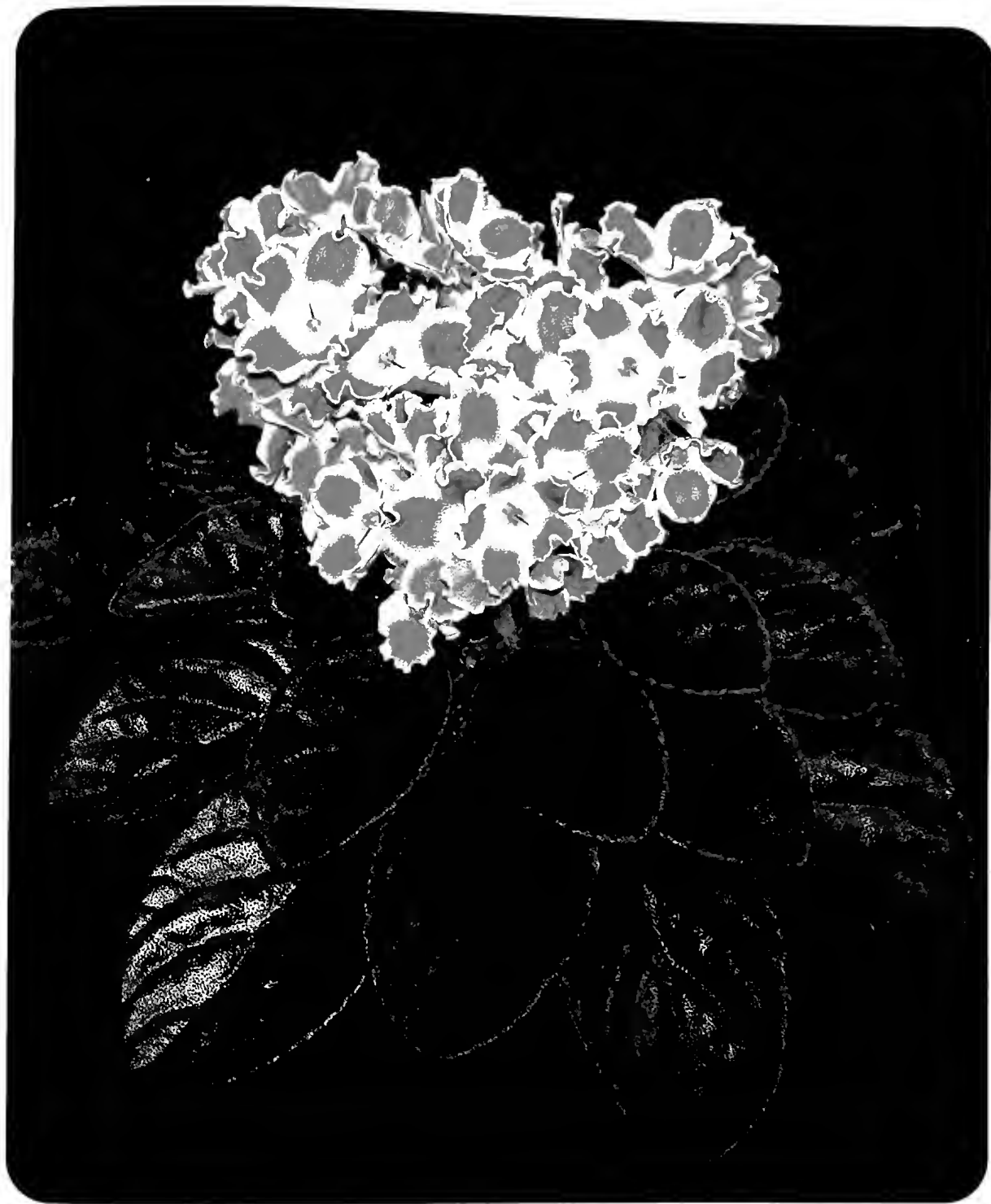
*S. Sorano /*

*LLyon Greenhouses*

*Miniature Trailer*



*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



*Photo Credit: Paula Bal*

## ***Radiant Glow***

*Exhibited by: Paula Bal*

*Hybridized by: T. Davis*

*Standard*

# For Beginners

By Cheryl Salatino

14 Maple Avenue • Sudbury, MA 01776

Email: [cheryl@dancingshadowsdesign.com](mailto:cheryl@dancingshadowsdesign.com)

## Plant Parenting *How we Nuture Nature*

There are times when I walk into the African violet growing area and wonder how I became the proud parent of so many offspring. Thinking back, it all started with a gift of one African violet. Once my original plant bloomed so beautifully, I decided to look for another. Then, there were two. It didn't take long before there were... well, many. Over the years of rearing these little ones into blooming beauties, I've found myself wearing multiple hats. Funny, each time I've described this "hat" phenomenon to other avid African violet growers, we shared similar stories. I've wondered whether a parenting gene might be at work here. When it comes to caring for our favorite plant, do you find yourself wearing several "hats" too?

### *The Provider*

Plant rearing is much like nurturing a child or a pet. A parent provides the basic necessities: food, clothing and shelter – not to mention lots of love. While our favorite plant is not as demanding as a child, they do have similar requirements. Fortunately, the needs are much simpler.

### *Food – a balanced diet*

Technically, plants make their own food through photosynthesis. However, it's our job to provide the ingredients.

### *Light – natural or artificial.*

Enough light is needed to encourage the growth and bloom cycles. Some varieties want more than others. Determine the optimal level for your plants to ensure enough light is available. If you see foliage reaching upward (too little light) or leaves bleaching or burning (too much light), adjustments are necessary. Artificial and natural light each has



its pluses and minuses. Artificial light is certainly more controllable by the grower, yet takes up space and electricity. In my experience, growing in natural light requires experimentation. However, once you understand seasonal sun patterns and take steps to protect from over exposure, window growing can be very rewarding.

**Water – essential hydration.** African violets require a consistent level of moisture. Not too much and not too little – just enough. Seems so unscientific. What we mean is drought and flood conditions must be avoided. As an example, once a plant is drooping from lack of water, only a very small amount of moisture is needed to revive it. Wait several hours before giving that plant a full drink. Using the 'short drink' rule of thumb avoids another extreme – potential drowning (because a stressed plant can't perform its usual functions right away). One more tip. Never leave a plant sitting in a saucer of water. Nobody likes soggy feet – just another opportunity to catch a cold!

**Fertilizer – appetizing repast.** Your family doesn't like to eat the same meal every day, do they? Of course not. Neither do your African violets. Change up the meal options. Rotate the fertilizers to ensure your plants are getting all the nutrients they need. Once a month, consider giving your plants a root system cleanse – that's a top watering rinse of plain water through the pot to eliminate lingering fertilizer salts.

### ***Clothing – classic or trendy containers***

Today, our plants can make quite the fashion statement. Whether you grow in simple plastic pots or decorative ceramics, there are so many choices.

### ***Classic – plastic is preferred.***

A simple inexpensive plastic pot, in any color that appeals, will certainly ease the watering schedule vs. clay or other porous choices that absorb moisture into the pot material. When your plants need a fashion overhaul, slip its plastic pot into a ceramic container as a very attractive display option, especially when window growing.

***Trendy – self watering.*** So many self watering solutions are available today. Oyama and Moist-Rite are just the tip of the iceberg. Although I'm wary of new fangled pots found in the big box chains, it's always fun to try one or two to test their effectiveness.

### ***Environment – shelter and protection***

***Soil*** – space to set down roots. Fresh potting mix gives roots breathing room to spread out and take advantage of what you're feeding them. Remember, old potting soil can get compacted and begin to hurt a plant's ability to develop. Fine African violet roots can't compete with a solid wall of potting mix or built-up layers of fertilizer salts. Plants will reward you if repotting is done every 6 months to a year.

***Conditions – consistent temperature and humidity.*** It's been said that African violets like the same conditions as we humans. It's true. The ideal growing temperature is between 70 to 80°F. Although, watch night time fluctuations. Keep temps within a 10 degree change to avoid fungal problems. During drier months, you may need to add some humidity to the living spaces. Long bouts of dry air can be uncomfortable for both species.

### ***Love – unconditional, of course***

When it comes to rearing African violets, a little love goes a long way. Too often we spoil those in our care. I know from experience that too much attention can have a negative impact on our favorite plant. Spoiling can lead to:

***Overwatering*** – drowning and plant collapse; root rot.

***Over-handling*** – care giver error, e.g. snapping off healthy leaves; dropping plants.

***Over-crowding*** – lack of air circulation in the

environment (a.k.a. too many plants in your care); spread of pests and diseases.

***The Therapist*** Understanding whether your African violet has developed behavioral issues is important to its long-term success. We've all heard the myth that African violets are hard to grow. Some say our favorite plant is finicky and temperamental. Not true. Getting to know *Saintpaulia* personality traits can make for a symbiotic relationship.

***Habits – variety-specific.*** While you do not need to research a plant's lineage, pay attention to its bloom cycle, growth pattern, moisture, and light requirements. Plants develop at their own unique pace. Watch for the cues.

***Prescribed Regimen – expect the familiar.*** Establish a regular appointment schedule and routine for the care of your plants. Consistency will help you spot changes for either better or worse. When trying experimental therapies, ensure the methods are applied to an individual and not a group.

***The Doctor*** – A Plant Parent quickly becomes the one who must cure all ills. Knowing the over-the-counter solutions is part of our routine health care. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

***Prevention*** – small steps to avoid big problems. Regularly pick up your plants to take a closer look. Everyone likes a little attention. Make sure you recognize changes. Plants often give us warning signals when things are not quite right.

***Isolation*** – protect the siblings. New members of your plant family may bring unwanted guests, or other problems, into the household. Give newcomers some time away to prove they do no harm. While it may seem like an eternity, 6 months in isolation is recommended.

***Pests*** – feeding frenzy. Most insects that feed on African violets can't be seen by the naked eye. Those you can spot must be addressed before an infestation sets in. Use caution and follow stated directions when applying chemicals to treat a problem. As a proactive measure, granules are available as a systemic pesticide to prevent "invisible feeders."

**Diseases** – fungal or viral. Knowing the symptoms helps to diagnose the problems. While you don't need to know all possible maladies, be familiar with the more common ones in your area. As an example, powdery mildew affects most regions when seasons change. Keep in touch with your physician network (other growers) to stay on top of issues they are experiencing too.

### ***The Investigator***

Something is afoot. There are times when a mystery must be solved in the growing room. Could it be changing weather wreaking havoc on your plants? Or, is water pH the culprit? Maybe a new soil recipe is having an ominous effect. Or, is it the cat? Whatever the mystery, some sleuthing is often needed to solve it.

**Research** – start with the AVM and the AVSA website for clues. Not all "experts" in the digital community live up to their claims. Online resources can be misleading, so stick with trusted African violet resources.

**Interview** – talk with other growers in your area. Weather, water, and product suppliers are unique to your location. Check out what others are experiencing before taking action.

**Document** – keep an AV journal. As the seasons change, a new set of challenges can occur. If you

log what's happening in the growing room, and how you've addressed it, you may hasten a solution if the conditions reappear.

### ***The Cheerleader***

As our young plants mature into big bloomers, it's time to show them off. Entering in an AVSA sponsored show offers a winning formula to celebrate success. Your plant can achieve accolades for its outstanding health and colorful appearance. Blue ribbons are the ultimate take-home reward. Maybe a photo of your winner will even be published in a local or national magazine!

**Name** – always label each plant with its proper given name. Kids never like it when Mom or Dad forget who they are.

**Schedule** – scout out the local African violet club's show schedule to determine the correct class(es) for your winners. Don't forget to groom plants in advance to look their very best.

**Enter** – cheer them on. Regardless of the ribbon awarded, your plants will be enjoyed by many others. People may even ask if you'd be willing to share a leaf.

When you stop and think about it, we do wear many hats as Plant Parents. Enjoy them all.

***Grow Smart, Grow Well.***

## **Coming Events**

### **November 2 & 3 - NEW JERSEY**

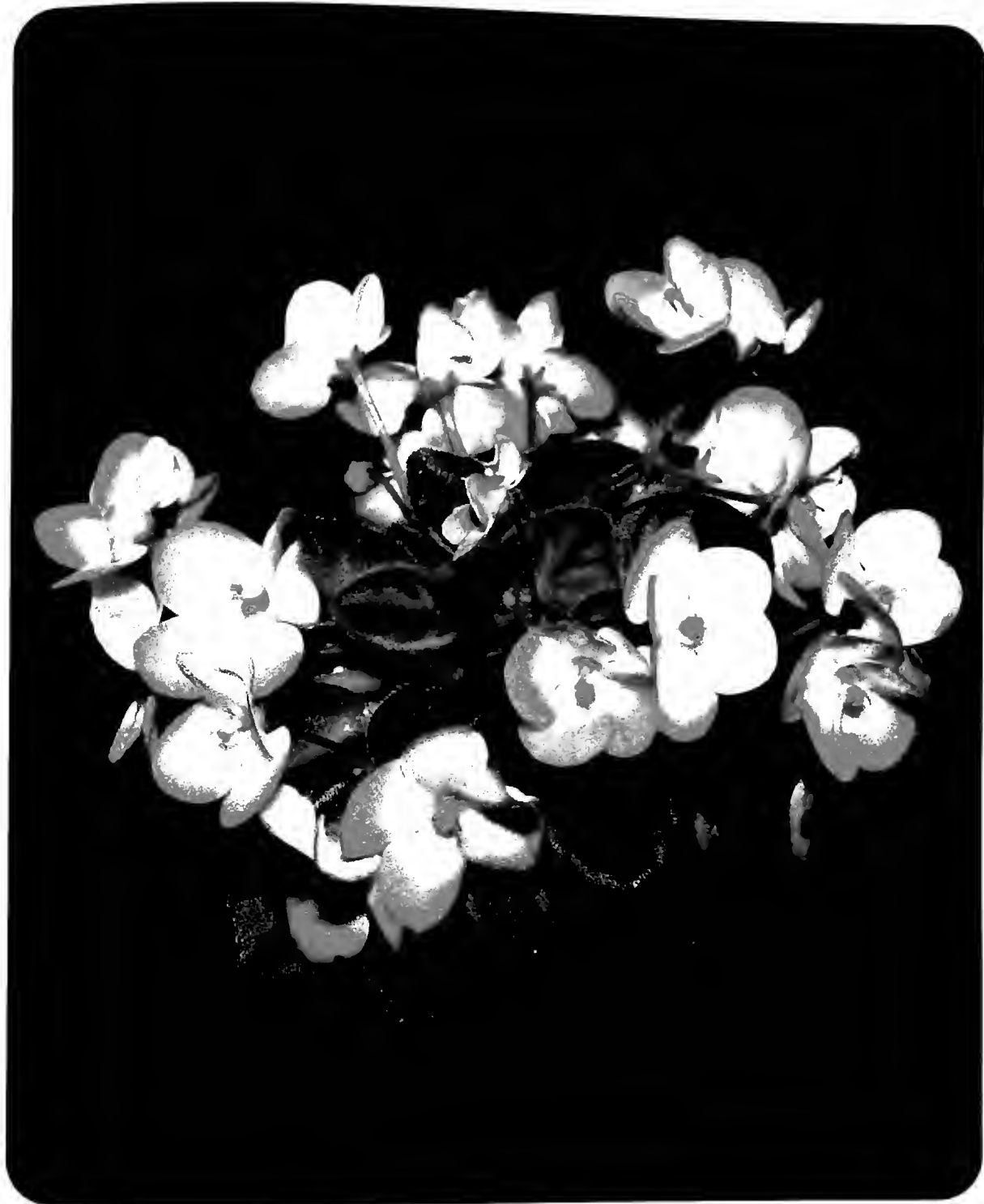
TriState African Violet Council  
Annual Show/Sale  
Frelinghuysen Arboretum  
53 East Hanover Ave.  
Morristown, NJ  
Nov 2 - 1:30pm - 4:30pm  
Nov 3 - 10:30am - 3:00pm  
Info: Jan Murasko  
Email: jmurasko@comcast.net

### **November 2 & 3 - MISSOURI**

AVC of Greater Kansas City  
Annual Show/Sale  
Loose Park Garden Center  
51st Street and Wornall  
Kansas City, MO  
Nov. 2 - 9am - 3pm  
Nov. 3 - 10am - 3pm  
Info: Fred & Pat Inbody  
(816) 373-6915  
E-Mail: kskd1@juno.com

### **November 7 - 9 - NORTH CAROLINA**

Mid-Atlantic AVS  
23rd Annual Convention/Show  
DoubleTree by Hilton, New  
Bern Riverfront  
100 Middle St, New Bern, NC  
28560  
www.maavs.org  
Info: Sue Hoffmann  
(757) 463-5383  
email: sue.hoffmann@cox.net



*Photo Credit: Neil Lipson*

## *Mac's Day Dream*

*Grown & Hybridized by: G. McDonald*

*Miniature*



## Thrips and Western Flower Thrips The Untold Story

I was hesitant about doing an article on a subject that I have only personally experienced a couple of times, but it does need to be addressed, as there is too much misinformation out there on the subject. The major concern is not only the thrips, but the viruses that they carry. I had to contact top experts in the USA on what was the big concern and how to fix it. I will discuss sticky strips, natural and chemical insecticides, and preventive tips on how to stop these "vectors of evil."

There are about 5,000 species of thrips, but the only ones that carry viruses that affect African violets and companion plants are Western Flower Thrips. Among the viruses (also referred to as tospoviruses) are INSV and the Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus. I am focusing on thrips, with some mention of viruses as collateral damage that we, as the growers, want to avoid.

First, the singular form of thrips is *thrips*, not thrip. I know it sounds strange to say one thrips, but that is the terminology. Thrips come in all sizes, from almost microscopic to quite large. Chilean thrips are almost too small to see and will thrive on foliage, while Western Flower Thrips, hereinafter called WFT, live and thrive off of pollen and will not be able to reproduce without it. There's a protein in pollen that the thrips need. Thrips vary across the US, but fortunately, none from the outside are WFT.

Now this is the most important thing to remember if you want to avoid WFT. For almost all of the United States, WFT will NOT survive over the winter. In other words, if you get thrips from the outside, they will not be WFT. This is called



over-wintering and means that, once the temperatures drop below 40 degrees F, the WFT will die. If you get any freezing weather, even one day, they're gone. If, however, it never goes below 40 degrees F, then you MAY be at risk. I made many calls to many plant pathologists, and the one name that came up over and over was Dr. Margery L. Daughtrey on the Cornell Academic Staff as the expert to consult

on questions with phytopathology, thrips, and tospoviruses. In speaking with her, she made it clear that the main concern was WFT, and how and why to avoid them.

From my conversation with her, this means that just about anyone who gets WFT will get them from growers, greenhouses, their friends, a club, or other plants that they introduce into their collection. One additional source is any kind of flowers from a florist or supermarket.

### Reproduction

There are four life stages: egg, larvae, pupae, and adult. The eggs are in the plant tissue, so contact pesticides can't reach them, but most systemic and translaminar (local, systemic activity) insecticides will. The ones in the blossoms are usually larvae. The pupa are in the soil, and the adults fly. *This is why you have to spray at least three times.* When you remove all the blossoms and buds, you are removing a full generation of thrips right there.

One problem with thrips is that you only need one to reproduce. This asexual reproduction is called Parthenogenesis. This really aggravates the thrips problem in knowing that you have to kill every single thrips. Only one is needed on your

shirt, your pet, or anything coming into the growing area. This is the big complication in controlling these insects and always will be.

Thrips reproduction is temperature related. For the warm months, they reproduce faster than during cool months. This affects your spraying schedule so, if the range is five to seven days apart, during the summer do the spraying with a five-day schedule. The opposite applies for winter.

### Treating for Thrips

In the twenty-six years I have been growing violets, the treatment of thrips has changed. Pesticides that were once very effective don't work at all. For example, Orthene PT-1300 used to be highly effective on thrips but stopped working almost ten years ago for the thrips that growers were getting. Malathion also used to work but has stopped, and it is just as well, as the odor and lack of safety make it intolerable.

What works as of today is a combination of two safe pesticides. Use Marathon for the soil, to kill the larvae, and either Avid or Conserve SC to spray the plants. For growers that I helped get rid of thrips, I never had to recommend dipping the plants, but just a thorough spraying, especially the center, where buds would emerge. Avid is highly effective, but is not quite as safe as Conserve SC and Marathon, which are extremely safe. Because AVID is translaminar, it penetrates the leaves AND the buds, in case you miss some during disbud-ding. Conserve SC is translaminar, and it is VERY effective on thrips as of this writing. That could change in the future. Marathon, which is systemic (absorbed through the plant) is dosed at 1/8 tsp. for a 3-in. pot and 1/4 tsp. for a 4-in. pot. The dose for Conserve SC is 0.12 fl. oz. (3.5 mL) of Conserve SC per gallon of water to spray the plants, especially the centers where buds form. If you use Bonide Tree and Shrub (watch out for Bayer's – it has fertilizer), use 1/2 oz. per gallon of water, and use for top water only, never for wick. Pour on soil, and pour off the extra and discard. Do not let the plant sit in the Imidacloprid solution, nor let it sit in trays.

For AVID, I use three drops in 11 oz. of water. The solution goes bad after twenty-four hours.

Keep the AVID concentrate in a cool place. Avid is **systemic** in that it penetrates into treated foliar plant cells where it remains active while the material that remains on the leaf surface rapidly breaks down. It's important to use chemical gloves when working with Avid. Also wear long sleeves, pants, and a mask. After treatment is done, leave the room for ten hours. The fewer plants you treat, the less you need all the extra clothing and, if you spray the plant in a partially closed plastic bag, very few precautions are needed, as none gets in the air.

### Disbudding

The first thing you do is remove all blossoms and buds, and I mean every one, even the tiniest of the tiny. Check every few days, as buds form quickly. Disbudding causes the plant to produce more buds. Put the buds in a SEALED plastic bag and dispose of in your trash. If they get outside into your garden, they can infest it, and then you WOULD bring them indoors on your clothes or pets. Once winter hits, however, they would all die. Disbud for a solid two months, and no shortcuts, please, no matter what, even if every plant looks clean.

You do want to get the buds and blossoms out of the plant room, not in a nearby trash can. Thrips can jump and fly. They usually don't go from room to room, but you really want them sealed up and gone. This is where most growers make their mistake and just toss the blooms in the closest trash can.

Some experienced growers will disbud everything except one plant that has some active blooms and let that act as a "magnet" for the last few thrips. Then they will disbud that plant a few days later. Yes, thrips will hunt them out, and they are amazing creatures to be able to all collect on one last bloom. I have seen this first-hand.

Both yellow and blue sticky traps work and can help to eliminate thrips. The more surface area you have, the more likely that they will catch any active thrips. Some growers have both colors and even use yellow or blue cardboard covered with Vaseline, which also works. With the Vaseline method, you can use a Q-tip to remove them once

they're dead. If you have the sticky strips and want to "reactivate" them, take some nail polish and once the thrips are gone, put a dab on each dead thrips to hide them from view so you can see the new ones on the strip. I have seen thrips on blossoms and the strips are clean, so this is not a guarantee, but it actually does help. My friend, Jeannie Myers, swears by the Catchmaster traps (available from [catchmaster.com](http://catchmaster.com)) for attracting more types of insects than her yellow sticky cards do. Some growers have even put up very large yellow or blue sheets and said that it cured the thrips completely, getting all of them. I would still disbud for two months, regardless.

Once the thrips are gone, you're set to allow blooms after the two-month period is over. Also, because the thrips are gone, any new ones you get will be treatable with Conserve SC. Thrips can acclimate to this, but not so much to Avid, and almost not at all to Marathon (Imidacloprid). Why? The mechanism of action of the Imidacloprid is tough to adapt to. As a neonicotinoid insecticide, it works by paralyzing the insects, not by other means that the insect can adapt to. Some insecticides will work on some thrips, while others may not, so you will have to rotate insecticides every three weeks, except for the Marathon. Use the Marathon a little more often than the directions call for, as they are too optimistic on the life of the granule in soil. Read the directions carefully so you do not "wash" it out by overwatering.

For WFT, use the Marathon/Conserve SC or Avid combination, but for other thrips, like Chilean Thrips, you would use Neem oil for the foliage after



**How big is a thrips?**

spraying Orthene. If you do this combo, you must leave the area for twenty-four hours. As of this writing, Chilean Thrips are not widespread and do not spread viruses like WFT do. However, they are



## Western Flower Thrips

very small – almost impossible to see – and are foliar, which means disbudding will not be effective. Spray the Orthene first and then spray with the diluted Neem oil, as the Neem oil will not allow the Orthene to penetrate the foliage. Conserve SC is sprayed every five to seven days, for three or four treatments and no more. If you still find thrips, switch to AVID or another pesticide, like Forbid, and do not go back to the old pesticide. New pesticides come out every month, it seems, so don't despair if one does not work.

Now, what do you do if you have thrips six months later? You can use the Marathon/Conserve SC combo again. Some say you can't because the thrips are "immune" to the Conserve SC. Well, if you're REALLY clean of thrips for six months, you know that nothing survived the previous period and any new thrips are from another source, not inside your home. There really is no way to have thrips for six months and not know it. You look for spilled pollen on blooms and, to actually see the insect, blow lightly and wait thirty seconds. They squiggle out of the pollen sacs when you do this. Just standing there and waiting is a good way. It will send chills up your spine, but you have to know about them to treat them.

Now I want to say a word about the ingredient in Marathon, which is Imidacloprid that is in the neonicotinoid class of insecticides. Imidacloprid, when used outdoors, will kill bees. It is also in Bayer's Tree and Shrub. Home use, indoors and outdoors, is not a major cause, but large scale use in farming is a BIG concern. For the bees, it is called Colony-Collapse Disorder, or CCD for short.

The case against neonicotinoids is compelling, but not 100%. For example, France banned the use of neonicotinoids in 1999, but they still suffer from CCD. In Australia, neonicotinoids are still used, but there are few problems with CCD. The Varroa mite is strongly suspected of causing CCD. So why are we discussing this with African violets?

There is the possibility that neonicotinoids could be banned in the US. However, the big advantage for African violet growers with Imidacloprid is that it is, by far, one of the safest indoor pesticides to use. It is highly effective for soil treatment, which is where the thrips larvae live. It is safer than almost any other pesticide and far more effective in the soil than "safe" natural products that have a spotty record for eliminating thrips. If it is banned, there's a good chance you will not be able to purchase Marathon in the future. This will complicate treating your plants if you have a thrips infestation and may force you to either throw out the collection, or use a less safe pesticide. You may want to have some extra on hand to use on your indoor plants, unless you have beehives in your house, which is not a common practice among growers.

### Misconceptions

Some misconceptions are that thrips can "hide" for long periods of time. No, they cannot. Another one is that insects other than WFT can spread viruses, such as mites. This is also not true. Thrips do not go into diapause, which is hibernation. To reproduce, WFT must have pollen, and WFT are the big worry, as we have discussed. They can live

for two to four weeks without pollen, but that's it, AND they cannot reproduce without the pollen. Disbudding for eight weeks really is effective in of itself. You can totally avoid pesticides if you do this, but make sure you get even the tiniest buds off the plants, and keep after them during the eight week period. Using the pesticides, however, really improves the odds.

Where people get in trouble is when they miss one of the stages of the spraying, and some thrips still live in between these "gaps." That is why it's important to get the Marathon and whatever plant spray you use to be on the schedule that the manufacturer has determined for thrips, which have a certain life cycle pattern. In fact, if you use Marathon for long periods, the thrips just don't have a way to let their larvae survive. Thrips are not bulletproof, as many people think.

Thrips evolve around pesticides, but in general, this advice should apply for years.

I would like to thank Sandy Skalski, Paula Bal, Jeannie Myers, and Joyce Stork for their help in this article, along with Dr. Margery Daughtrey, Phytopathologist. For those of you who buy plants or get them from friends, read my article "Back from the Show - Isolate AND Spray."

*Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant. He can be reached by emailing him at [ndlipson@gmail.com](mailto:ndlipson@gmail.com) or calling 610-356-6183 after 1pm Eastern time. He will return your call.*



**Thrips damaged plants**

# AVSA PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR HELP!

## A DESIGN BOOK IS BEING CREATED

By Publications Chair Lynne Wilson

AVSA is very fortunate to have many talented designers included in our society. The publications committee would greatly appreciate articles from those designing men and women to share with the future designers and designer want-to-be's. This is your chance to contribute and come to the aid of AVSA by sharing some of your vast knowledge.

Our own Treasurer, Edna Rourke, an award-winning designer, is the creator of this concept. Affiliates, please encourage your designers to submit articles of interest to other designers, and those individuals who would like to learn more. Perhaps you no longer do designs, but have done so in the past. Please consider sharing some of the

hints you learned over the years. Articles can cover anything from the mechanics to the final design. Underwater, small arrangements, larger arrangements, container gardens, and even how to transport your designs to a show. All this can be included in this new publication project.

The AVSA Publications Committee, and Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor, are eagerly awaiting your articles. Ruth can make the first-time writer look good so do not hesitate to submit your design articles, photos, and helpful hints.

Thanking you in advance,

Lynne Wilson, AVSA Publications Chairman

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## Membership Dues Increase

By John Carter, AVSA President

At the Annual African Violet Society of America Board of Directors meeting held May 29, 2013 in Austin, Texas, the Board voted to approve a membership dues increase of five dollars for USA members and more for international members. The increase was necessary to keep up with rising costs associated with the publication of the *AVM* and operation of the society. Costs for postage have risen significantly, especially for international members, as has the cost of insurance and utilities.

The last dues increase was approved in 2007. In 2009 the board approved reduction in the size of the magazine to offset increased publication costs. Since that time, our costs have continued to rise just as you have seen your personal expenses rise. The alternative to increasing dues was to reduce the number of issues of the *African Violet Magazine*.

Operation costs are also being cut in the office. The first such reduction was the reduction of the staff announced in the July issue of the *AVM*. We have new Committee Chairs in the areas of Finance, Membership and Internet who are

working towards improving benefits, improving communication, increasing membership as well as retaining members and managing the financial aspects of the society. Donations for the Convention Show Awards, Building and Maintenance, Booster, Boyce Eden's and Tinari funds have reduced significantly due to the economic condition of the country.

We recognize that we may lose some members due to the increase in dues. But we ask you to consider that the increase is only \$1.25 per issue. You are probably paying \$1.25 more per gallon of fuel that you purchase today than you did in 2009. We hope that you will support our continuing efforts to diligently oversee the management of our society.

The new rates effective November 1, 2013 are:

Individual Membership USA \$35.00  
Associate Member USA \$17.50—no magazine  
International Individual, Canada \$40.00  
International Individual, (not Canada) \$60.00  
Library \$35.00



# The Violet Network

By Jennie Lawrence

Email: [missjennae@yahoo.com](mailto:missjennae@yahoo.com)

There are many useful resources on the Internet for African violet lovers at any level in the hobby. The purpose of this column is to review those resources, and perhaps introduce readers to new places to find information.

This issue will focus on the **African Violet Brat Pack 2**. The delightful name, African Brat Pack, came about because one of the original founders, Cheralyn Maturi and others, were members of a group that could be argumentative. Cher wanted an online forum where anybody could discuss African violets in a safe, friendly atmosphere. Thus the Brat Pack was formed. It definitely conformed to Cher's wishes.

The original Brat Pack site was quite attractive. This required some difficult, time consuming programming. The end result was a nicely decorated forum.

Due to ownership issues, the Brat Pack 2 was formed after Maturi passed away. Janet Stromborg, co-founder of the original Brat Pack, christened the forum the African Violet Brat Pack 2. Thanks to the moderators the Brat Pack 2 is every bit as attractive as the original site. There are approximately 665 members in the second Brat Pack, although new members join almost every week.

An array of options is available to members on this very user-friendly site. Users are required to login. Every one has a distinct user name. For example, the forum owner goes by AV Janet. Her co-moderator uses the handle Dr. Sylvia. Personal names and information are protected.

Once a user is logged in, a list of options comes up. One can update their member profile, check for messages from other brats, check out the member list, or run a search for information about a specific topic.

Users can also go to one of six boards. One of the most popular is **African Violet Discussions**. A click on this takes you to any number of discussions about every African violet related topic imaginable. A few samples of the subjects being discussed one day in August included: "Anyone have June '82 AV Magazine?" (Yes, someone did.) "Start a local club." "The thrips are gone." It is easy

to start a new thread, and easy to respond to existing threads. Members rejoice over other's successes, and commiserate when they are having problems.

Under this same board is a thread titled, **"Links to African Violet Related Topics."** This thread alone is an incredible resource. One can find a link to virtually any violet related question imaginable.

**"Eye Candy"** allows a member to show off their plants. A few simple guidelines offer directions for posting photos. "A Violet of the Week" is chosen. The grower then provides the plant's description, growing conditions and habits, and other tidbits of information.

**"Life Between the Violets"** is for off-topic discussions. Happy Birthday greetings are common, as are discussions about other plants. People also talk about what is happening in their lives.

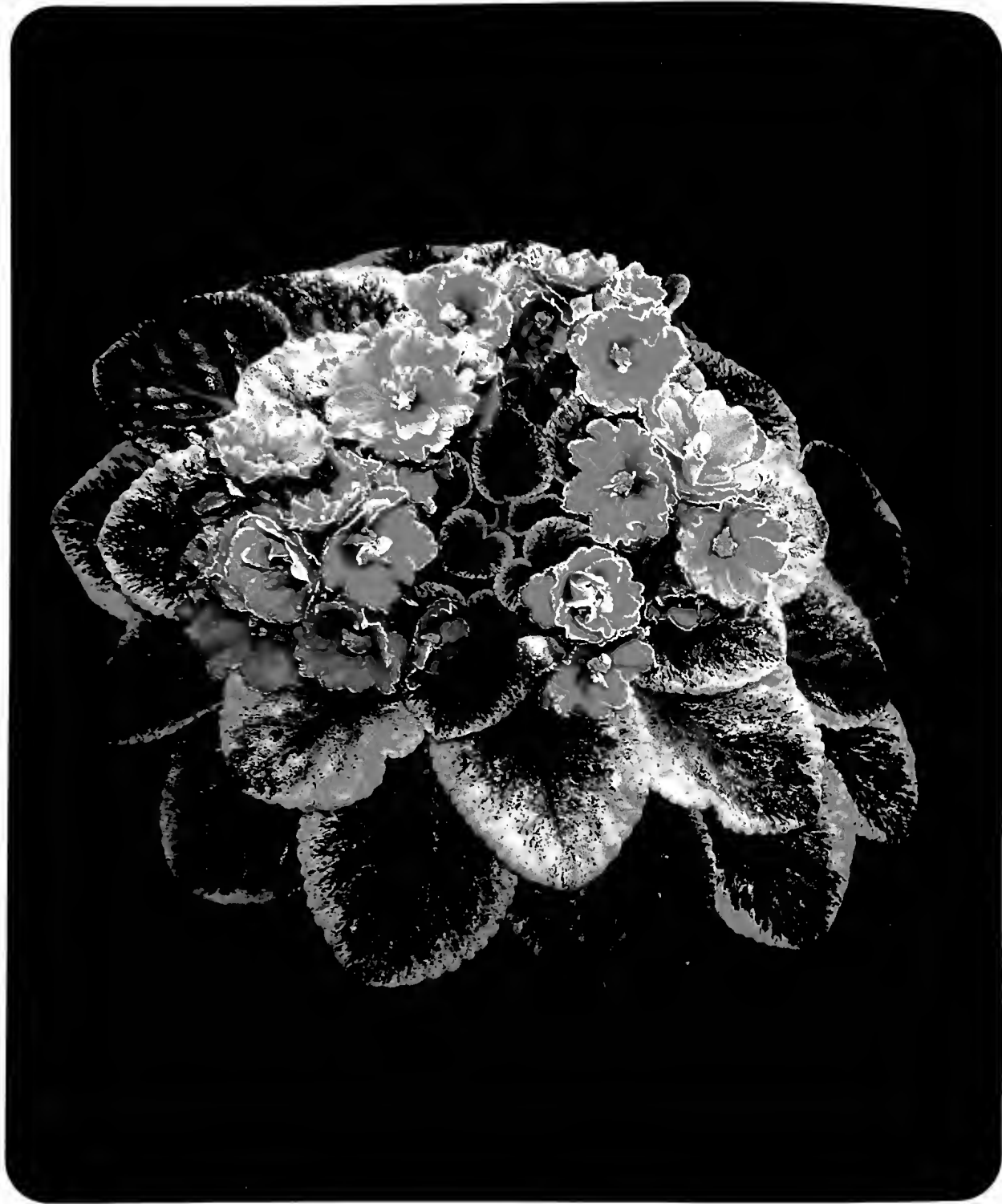
Perhaps one of the most fun features is the **"Wants and Extras"** page. Members list violets they are looking for, and plants and leaves that are extras in their collections. A lot of trading takes place, based on this board. A 'sub-board' is set up for people wishing to participate in a spring and Fall Round Robin leaf exchange.

The final board is called, **"Our Hybridizing Projects."** This caters to the members who are interested in coming up with new varieties. Again, a number of topics are available for discussion and education. Recent topics included: "Naming a Seedling," "Writing up a seedling description for AVSA," and numerous discussions of actual crosses people were working on. A 'sub-board' to this one is for sharing seed pods and pollen.

The Forum Info and Stats listed 6, 348 threads when checked at the end of August. There were 67,575 total posts. One can find out who is currently online, and who has been in the last twenty-four hours.

The **African Violet Brat Pack 2** is a delightful resource for both novices in the hobby, and veterans. There are both male and female members. The mix of people involved makes this a very educational, friendly, reference site. It can be found at [www.avbratpack2.proboards.com](http://www.avbratpack2.proboards.com)





*Photo Credit: Paula Bal*

## *Buckeye Scrumptious*

*Exhibited by: Paula Bal*

*Hybridized by: P. Hancock*

*Large*



## ***Jolly Mel***

*Exhibited by:*

*Ben Haning*

*Hybridized by:*

*H. Pittman*

*Semiminiature*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



## ***Jersey Snow Flakes***

*Exhibited by:*

*Richard Nicholas*

*Hybridized by:*

*R. Kurzynski*

*Standard*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*

## AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

Susan Hapner - Chairman • 35 Ridge Point Dr. • Chesterfield, MO 63017

Donations received from: June 1, 2013 – July 31, 2013

Total = \$ 205.00

### Multicolor

AVS of Greater Tulsa



### Geneva

Billings Bloomer AVS



### Thumbprint

Peggy Barber

Anne Nicholas

Nancy Loeb

Pamela Morgan



## In Memory

### Essie Bays

Essie Bays, 85, of Maple Hill, KS. passed away August 1, 2013 in Topeka, KS. Essie was a member of the Topeka AVS and served as President of the Club for several years. She won several Blue Ribbons,

showing her beautiful African violets at shows. Essie is missed.



## AVSA BOOSTER FUND

Shirley Berger, Chairman

July 1 – August 31, 2013 - TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS; \$440.00



### Geneva

Bill Farrand, Ann Arbor, MI

Hans Inpijn, Dana Point, CA

Life member donation



### Multicolor

Darcel Tolle, Dexter, MI

*In memory of Nancy Farrand (Bill Farrand's mother)*



### Two-tone

Betty W Ferguson, Little Rock, AR

Janis A Goode, Dallas, TX

### Thumbprint

Debra C Black, Deland, FL

Linda Garramone, Bay Shore, NY

Denise Gray, Chichester, NH

Kris Johnson, Bellingham, WA

Donna Mills, Dover, OH

Marvin K Nester, Lakeland, FL

Christine R Moore, Silver Spring, MD

Mary Smith, Chambersburg, PA

Janice Sorensen, Centennial, CO

Caroline Storey, San Marcos, TX

Katharine L Varnes, Lakewood, CO



# ROUTINE PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Some preventive measures to follow for growing beautiful African violets:

1. Thoroughly inspect plants periodically and all new plants prior to purchase.

2. All newly purchased plants, plants suspected of carrying pests or diseases, and plants which have been exhibited in a show should be isolated from six to eight weeks, preferably in a separate room. Use separate tools and watering containers for these plants to avoid contaminating the rest of your plants. Inspect these plants carefully before placing in your African violet collection.

3. After handling newly acquired plants, plants suspected of pests or diseases, or plants just returned from a show, wash hands and tools thoroughly before handling other plants in your collection.

4. Do not expose your African violets to cut flowers or potted plants from outside sources, especially those from out-of-doors. After gardening outdoors wash hands and change clothes before working with your violet collection. A number of pests, such as thrips, can be brought into the house on potted plants, pets, cut flowers, hands, hair, or fingers. This doesn't mean that one shouldn't enjoy the outdoors and outdoor plant material, but that one should be aware of the possibilities.

5. Use good sanitary practices. Don't crowd plants. Space plants to avoid overlapping foliage. This permits good air circulation and reduces the chances of pests and diseases spreading from one plant to another. Keep plants clean and well groomed. Look for and remove all dead and dying stems, blossoms, and leaves. Clean benches, shelves, and so on, keep area free of old plant debris, trash, and loose soil. Sterilize all pots before reuse. Wash, scrub and soak all containers and saucers before reuse. (For soaking use a solution of one cup liquid household bleach to a gallon of hot water.) Let soak for at least 10 minutes or until water cools. Rinse in clean water. Wash hands and clean equipment after every use.

6. Use sterilized or pasteurized soil (or other growing media) and properly dispose of all used soil which may contain plant roots, disease organisms, insect pests, and excess salts from fertilizer.

From the *AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges*

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PS Form 3526, August 2012 (Page 1 of 3) (Instructions Page 2) PSN 7530-01-000 (9/31) PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com

# "Hats Off" to the Metropolitan St. Louis AV Council

by Kathleen Dickman



**'Ness' Angel Blush'**

Best in Show - Susan Hapner

*And, to have only four hours to set up and have all entries done.* The four local clubs gloomily agreed, and all worried that the show, "Hats Off To Violets," would suffer greatly.

Set-up time came, and exhibitors charged in with over 200 entries. Fran Russom, one of the co-show chairmen, made sure everyone had room to work, and then got on to staging. To her surprise, there was lots of help to set up and cover all the tables. Some members even brought family and friends to help.

The classification committee brought a few extra brushes to "finish the dusting" of plants so that exhibitors wouldn't be called back for minor grooming issues. There was a feeling of togetherness that kept everyone in good spirits, as they raced against the clock.



**'Jersey Girl Trail'**

Best Trailer - Ron Mesa

For the first time in 58 years, the botanical garden scheduler was unrelenting. Programming difficulties forced the Metropolitan St. Louis African Violet Council to accept August 3rd and 4th as the annual show dates.

At six a.m. on show day, yawns and grumbles turned to smiles as exhibitors and judges arrived to find that members had worn their hats—hats ranging from the cowboy variety to

the dinosaur variety to the very British, satin variety - each adorned with violet blossoms and purple. The judging went well and was finished in time for the nine a.m. opening to the public.

Patrons admired and sales were brisk. It had worked! The show

had 173 horticultural exhibits, thirty-six designs, and four special exhibits, for a total of 213 entries. When the out-of-town judges finished their report, the show received a score of 97.95 and earned the AVSA blue rosette! The theme table shined, the education table was great, and the membership table was gracious and helpful.

Disaster was averted! The Metropolitan St. Louis African Violet Council walked away with one of the best shows in years, and the satisfaction of knowing what cooperation and teamwork can do. *Hats off St. Louis, for a job well done!*



**"Mexican Hat Dance"**

Best Design

Kathleen Dickman



**Susan Sumski and Gary & Pat Dunlap**



***Episcia  
'Blue Nile'***

*Exhibited by:  
Eunice Curry*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



***Jolly  
Dazzler***

*Exhibited by:  
Jan Davidson  
Hybridized by:  
H. Pittman  
Semiminiature*

*Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky*



# Make Your African Violet Club Grow (Teach, Teach, Teach)

by Pat Hancock

Page 35 of the *Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges* states that —

"The **purpose** of African violet shows is to challenge and encourage club members to grow better plants and to stimulate the general public to cultivate the hobby. The **value** of African violet shows is to educate club members and the public in propagation, general culture, and the decorative uses of African violets."

I contend that the reason a lot of African violet clubs are not growing, but declining, is that our shows and our club meetings do not do enough to teach our members and the general public.

Teaching does not have to be boring. It can be fun. There are ways to make it into a competition of sorts that members will enjoy. All clubs are required to have an educational exhibit at their AVSA show, but the two local clubs that I belong to have carried it a step further. We have "teaching" stations scattered throughout the show with different individuals manning them. Some of the stations that we have tried are: "potting down necks," "taking babies off of a leaf," "planting a leaf to make more African violets," "what is a seed pod?," "saving a plant by restarting the crown," etc. I am sure you can probably think of others. The secret is to teach, teach, teach.

Almost everyone who comes to an African violet show has probably at some time bought an African violet at a grocery or big-box store. They often keep them for a few months until they die because they received no care instructions with them. Many give up and decide that they cannot grow African violets. These people are your prospective members. They come to your show because they want to learn how to grow African violets. Your show is the perfect place to get the general public "hooked" on growing African violets if you show them how to do it.

One club that I belong to gives away several very nice African violets during the two days of the show. Provide a box for people to submit their contact information and draw a name out at posted

times. These names can be a list of prospective new members who will receive a notice and the agenda of your club meetings.

When new people come to your meetings, make them really welcome. Both of my clubs give a "start-up" kit to new members. It consists of a small "greenhouse" container filled with potting soil, perlite, vermiculite, a starter plant or two, and some leaves. Then the job of the club is to teach them how to grow. Every meeting should have something "hands-on" so that new members are actually getting to "learn by doing."

"Project plants" can be an excellent "teaching tool" if they are required to be brought back to the meeting every two months and the appropriate care done THERE. Leaves are removed every two months and plants are repotted every fourth month.

My Dayton club is playing a new game this year called VIOLET JEOPARDY. We have divided the club into five teams and we have a scorekeeper. At the end of each meeting we will have five answers to questions about a prearranged subject connected to African violets.

Each team has a bell to "ring in," and the first team to give the correct question gets the points. At the end of the year, we will do something very special for the members of the team with the most points. Everyone is excited about the competition, and we will be learning a lot about African violets in the process. Some of the questions will be taken from the *African Violet Magazine*, which is another incentive for club members to join AVSA in order to have access to the magazine.

These are just a few suggestions as to how you can "spice up" your shows and meetings in order to keep members interested. I am sure you can come up with many more — the main thing is **not** to do the same thing year in and year out until your members are bored and disinterested. The most important thing is to do new things and **teach, teach, teach.**

# Which Leaves are Best to Use For Propagation?

By Chris Mason

Many growers are under the assumption, or have been told, to only use leaves from a second or third row, never from the oldest row. Many commercials and hobbyists don't necessarily agree with this theory. They will often use leaves from the outer row, which may not be in perfect condition, put them right down in their usual potting soil and watch them propagate readily.

Jo Schrimsher of Jo's Violets in Victoria, Texas, is one of the commercials who successfully uses leaves from the outer row. This is also a good method to rid the plant of older leaves which can sap energy, and also doesn't affect/ruin the symmetry of a potential show plant and is grooming at the same time.

Hattie Baggett, also uses older leaves, often getting fewer plantlets, but finds they may be stronger.

I have also been successful using outer row leaves. I place the leaf in an individual pot, with my usual wicking mix, 2 parts coarse perlite, 1 part medium vermiculite, 1 part Miracle Gro organic soil or Bacto potting soil, and approximately 1/2 part coarse horticultural charcoal. I place these in a covered tray, slightly open.

If I don't have time to place the leaves in soil immediately, I put them in cups of water, in a tray with a lid, slightly open, under lights. A majority of them will root readily in those warm, humid

conditions and even start putting out babies under water within a few weeks. It can be beneficial to spray these leaves with fish emulsion or regular fertilizer.

Since I do extensive trading with other hobbyists and commercial growers, I have found this method of keeping cut leaves especially beneficial to hold prior to shipping (which could be weeks/months due to weather conditions.) An important point is to not crowd the cups with too many leaves to reduce the risk of rotting.

Another point I would like to bring up is that some people believe that leaves that have rooted in water are going to have to put out a new set of roots once they are put in soil. Most commercial and serious hobbyists that I know disagree. We believe the roots just continue doing their job and adjust to their new environment. After a few weeks in the soil, try pulling on the leaf. If it does not readily come out, you can be certain that the water roots have "taken," and are firmly set in the soil.

The type of leaf, whether it is small, immature, large, or older, isn't always the issue with productivity, often, the variety of African violet can affect this process.

From *Ye Bay Stater*, publication of the Bay State AVS

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## My Little Idea

Betty K. Hazard, Tucson AVS

Folks who know me realize that I sometimes forget things. You know, the "how-could-you-forget-that" things, like putting the wick into the pot before putting in the soil and the plant. I've tried, with limited success, pushing the yarn into the hole in the bottom of the pot. And it usually stays, although it is only at the very bottom.

Then, I had an "Ah-ha!" moment: After repotting six plants and forgetting the wicks, I simply

got a double-0 crochet hook, seemed about the right size to me, not very big, but large enough for the yarn. I thrust it up, handle-end first, in a hole in the bottom of the pot. Then, I lay the yarn on the hook still protruding out the bottom, and drew it up into the soil. This resulted in the yarn going the full height of the pot! Since the holes were all along the edge (not just one hole in the center) the plants were not disturbed.



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

*Dean's Silver Veil*

*Exhibited by: Tim Ferguson*

*Hybridized by: C. Hobbs/ H. Hobbs*

*Semiminiature*



Photo Credit: Paula Bal

## *Rob's Hallucination*

*Exhibited by: Paula Bal*

*Hybridized by: R. Robinson*

*Semiminiature*

# African Violets and the Visually Impaired

By John Joe - Leisure Skills Instructor

Blind Rehabilitation Special - Department of Veterans Affairs - Augusta, GA

Being a Leisure Skills Instructor at a Blind Rehabilitation Center offers many opportunities for helping veterans change their lives. Growing African violets has been an invaluable assessment tool for me. 'Buckeye Trail' is my favorite African violet to grow. It is easy to grow and propagate from a leaf or a stem.

The veterans I work with were all sighted at one time, and when they come to the center, they are all declared legally blind, although some have a limited amount of sight. Veterans come to the center to learn to be independent with their limitations. This is where growing African violets comes in as a therapeutic assessment tool.

Veterans go to different classes, such as Visual Skills, to learn to use optical devices. They go to Living Skills to learn to be independent in their home, and to Manual Skills to learn to use his hands and tools a different way.

Leisure Skills takes all of these skills and lets the veteran practice them in the real world. In leisure skills, I give the veterans a choice of participating or not. At first they do not want to participate in Leisure Skills. After they discover I will give them a plant to take home, they want to participate.

Teaching the veteran about African violets, I can assess what type of teaching techniques to use so the veteran will learn tasks faster. At the center, we are working on skills to train the veteran to be independent when they go home. Transplanting a violet uses the same skills as cooking. You have to be able to plan what you need to transplant your violet. Will you plant it in a clay pot, plastic pot, and will you be using a self-watering system? Our participants have to make decisions just as you have to make in cooking. Mixing your soil is like mixing flour for a cake. Cleaning after you repot a plant is like cleaning the table after you prepare a meal.

When you see a veteran disbudding his violet, you can judge if he will be able to do home repairs, such as changing a light bulb or working in the

yard. Growing that African violet will take planning ahead, using time management skills to water that plant, to groom it, and learn how to root violets to give away to family and friends. The veteran will have to use financial management and communication skills to plan how to get his supplies for growing violets.

He will have to ask for transportation from his family and friends or use public transportation.

At the center, I will help him find resources of where to go when shopping, for his supplies. When he goes shopping, he will have to read the signage in the store using his adaptive devices. When he receives the bill, he will have to read the amount due, and this is like reading a menu or reading your prescription for medicine. If the veteran wants to know more about growing African violets, I give him resources to look in the library or on the computer. We also use the county extension agents for information.

While going to the greenhouse to get a violet, the veteran is demonstrating he can use the skills he is learning at the center. He will have to travel safely in this strange environment. This knowledge will carry over into traveling in the mall, stores, airport, schools, and hospitals. Getting around outside, the veteran has to demonstrate he can cross streets, detect drop offs, avoid obstacles, and react to surface changes.

Raising that African violet can motivate you to do more than you thought. They have helped me change the way I do rehab. As a Leisure Skills instructor, I use simple activities to help the veteran learn to be independent when he returns home. All the skills the veteran is learning can be transferred to other areas of life. Growing African violets is an enjoyable, non-threatening way of assessing a veteran's learning abilities. Concrete judgements can be made of the veteran's abilities by observing how he cares for his violets. I have used African violets to work with stroke, hospice, and Alzheimer veterans with great success.

# You Too Can Write About African Violets

By Sayeh D. Beheshti

Every time I was faced with the task of writing an article about African violets, a certain sense of dread would come over me; after all, I wasn't the most knowledgeable or advanced grower in our club. What could I possibly have to say that hadn't already been said before?

At the 2011 African Violet Society of America (AVSA) convention, one particular presentation caught my eye and made my heart skip a beat: *African Violets in Print: Taking the Mystery out of Writing and Publication*. The presenter was Mary Schaeffer, a writer of the For Beginners column in *African Violet Magazine*. It was as if someone had recognized my challenge and was extending a hand to help me.

My own personal venture into the realm of writing about African violets had begun just a few months earlier when I was suddenly faced with the daunting task of writing and publishing our monthly club newsletter.

Although I had a lot of experience writing reports and technical papers, I knew that I needed a different approach to keep the club newsletter interesting and members motivated. Over the months that followed, I limited my writing to the bare essentials of reporting the past meeting's presentation. Now, Mary's promise of demystification gave me hope that she would simplify the whole writing process, maybe even give me some ideas on how to make writing less painful, and possibly even enjoyable!

Mary wasted no time, and began her presentation by stating that **anyone** can write for publication. I could feel the energy level in the room increase as she continued with a brief overview of her own start in publication. She pointed out that although she had degrees in math and finance, she had never actually studied writing, but now writes full time. "Contrary to popular perception, you don't need to be the -December 2017 best grower in the club to write, and in fact, one of the best subjects to write about is your failures", she said.

The two things you need to write any article are: 1. a little knowledge and 2. an angle or hook.

1. A little knowledge of your subject and target audience.

A really essential part to writing a successful article is to know your audience: Who are you writing for? Will they know what you are talking about, and most

importantly, will they care about what you have to say? Your target audience will determine the tone and the level of information you should include and will also drive the amount of background information required. An article written for a community newspaper is quite different from one written for a group with a focused interest. You also want to make sure what you write about is something that others care about. One great way to gauge interest in a subject is to participate in on-line discussion groups and get a sense of what topics are important to others.

2. Your article should have an angle or hook to differentiate it from all the other articles written on the same subject.

You could have a different approach, or new way of doing something. Is there a new product, or have you heard about somebody's new technique? Other interesting angles could be failures or lessons learned as well as success stories from colleagues.

People are also quite interested in different activities that you or your club has done with African violets, whether it's involvement with the community or working with charity.

You can also make a habit of jotting down interesting thoughts as you find little bits of time here and there. Soon you will have a collection of thoughts that you can base your article on.

By writing regularly, you can develop your own platform and attract an audience who likes your style and approach, creating interest and leading to name recognition and maybe, just like Mary, make it your full-time job.

When you decide to write and put together an article, structure your article with a beginning, middle, and end. Begin by telling the audience what you want to say. The title and the first sentence are the most important part of an article, and you should try to have a catchy title but also one that tells the reader what the article will be about. You can begin with a working title and improve it as you write.

In the middle, you can give information and discuss your subject while you conclude by reviewing what you've just said at the end.

So, why aren't some articles published?

One of the hardest things to take is pouring your



heart into an article just to learn that it is not being published. Instead of taking it as a personal insult, you should consider some of the reasons why it may not have been published:

The most common issue is that a similar article was published recently or is being planned for an upcoming issue. There may not have been enough space in the magazine or there were just too many submissions. (Editor's Note: This is NOT a problem with the *African Violet Magazine*...) In some cases, the article was not deemed interesting enough for the target audience. The article needed too much work and editing. Sometimes it is easy for you to lose sight of your weaknesses, so make sure you use the spelling and grammar checker options of your software as you type. Keep your sentences short and avoid rambling. You can join online writing groups for feedback or ask others to proofread, or review your article. This will allow you to get feedback on the flow and interest in your subject before submitting it for publication.

Sometimes it makes your life easier to question the editor in advance to see if they would be interested in a

particular article before you put all of your effort into it.

You can submit the same query to multiple publications to see if any one of them would be interested. However, make sure to send the actual article to only one publication.

As Mary's presentation ended, the attendees broke into a round of applause. It was obvious that her presentation had indeed "taken the mystery out of writing and publication" as she had promised.

Personally, I have used her two important guidelines of knowing the target audience and having an angle to step beyond my usual club newsletter reports and have begun submitting articles for *Chatter*.

Initially, I made a commitment to write one article for each issue, but as writing becomes more and more enjoyable, I find myself writing at every chance. As I chat with other growers, I have also developed a strong belief that each of us has something interesting to share. I hope that you too will follow Mary's guidelines and unleash your potential as you share your stories in future issues of *Chatter*.

From *Chatter*, publication of the AVS of Canada

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## DIVIDING STREPS

By Leonie Chirgwin

After 3-5 years, your *Streptocarpus* will probably be about twelve inches in diameter, a mass of leaves, old and new, with flower stalks sticking up. The plant will be completely pot-bound with roots extending out of the draining holes.

Time to divide and re-pot! Run a large sharp knife around the edge to loosen the plant from the pot. Being brutal, just tug the whole plant out of the pot.

With the knife, cut at least half of the matted root 'ball' off.

Remove any damaged leaves and dry flower stems.

You will then need to see where you can cut between the separate growing crowns.

Then you can neaten each crown before planting them individually.

Only use water without fertilizer, until the plant recovers from your 'gentle' treatment.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia



*Divided Crowns*

# What's in a Name?

by Mel Grice, Editor  
*The Violet Connection*

Most of you who know me know that I am fanatic about properly naming and labeling gesneriads. Shortcuts and abbreviations lead to confusion when passing on plant material to other growers. I have seen quite a few mislabeled plants at the various shows I have attended. After the show is over, many exhibitors willingly share leaves or cuttings of their show plants. If the plant is mislabeled to begin, with then the error is further compounded on down the line as the plant material is propagated and passed on to others. Let me try to demystify gesneriad names for you so that we can all have properly labeled plants.

Plants have been classified and named for one very good reason — so we can all clearly distinguish one from another. The botanical name is the only name that refers to precisely that plant all over the world and ensures that no two plants can ever be confused. Common gesneriad names such as Widow's Tears, Magic Flowers, or Cupid's Bower, for the genus *Achimenes* can easily be confused in various parts of the world.

When a new plant is discovered, it is given a name according to rules accepted worldwide by an international committee of scientists. The system is called Binomial Nomenclature and was first used by Linnaeus (1707-1778). His system gives each plant two names; a genus (generic) name and a species (specific) name. The genus represents a group of related species. Each name is made up of one or more parts in Greek (Latinized) or Latin. Each part usually has a meaning and together a partial description of the plant is attempted. Some names are indicative of the collector, geographic location of the plant, or in honor of another scientist.

The Linnaean system is really a coding system. The system assures that only one name is ever given to a genus and that a species name can only be used once in each genus.

Many growers are upset with what seems like the almost constant need to re-label many gesneriads. Once a name is given to a genus, if a

plant is found to have been placed wrongly, the name must be changed. DNA analysis of plant material has only been feasible in the last ten years or so, resulting in many recent name changes. Sometimes an entire group has been transferred from one genus to another — for example, many of the former *Chirita* is now classified in the genus *Primulina*.

Botanical names hold clues to a plant's history and characteristics. The first word, the genus name, is always capitalized and is usually a noun. The second word, the species, is not capitalized and is usually an adjective. The species name is an adjective since it is used to describe a characteristic that separates the plant from other members of the group. It often refers to a color, the shape of the leaf or flower, or the region the plant comes from. The genus and species names are italicized when typed.

An example of a gesneriad name is *Streptocarpus parviflorus*. *Strepto* means "twisted" and *carpus* means "fruit." *Parvi* means "small" and *florus* means "flowers." Then this plant has twisted fruits (seedpods) and small flowers. But this is certainly not the only gesneriad with these characteristics. The name *Streptocarpus parviflorus* could be compared to a name like our own rather than just a description. In that sense, a plant's name is more exclusive than a person's name. There are many Robert Smiths but only one *Streptocarpus parviflorus*.

Another issue is pronunciation of these names. Don't worry too much; even the "experts" can't seem to agree on what is correct, due to Latin being a dead language. But that is better left for another article. I will be happy if you just spell the names correctly on your pots or labels!

(Special thanks to Jeremy Keene for his help with this article.)

From the *Violet Connection*, publication of the Ohio State AVS,

# Renew Your Hobby Vows

By Susan Kotello, Winnipeg, MB, Canada

My African violet and gesneriad collection was nearly wiped out. When I finally pinpointed the cause of their demise, it was too late. What had caused the damage to my precious plants you may ask? Was it an insect infestation, sweeping disease or a period of sweltering heat? No! Even worse, it was caused by something only I could control, the human factors of time and interest, or should I say, a serious lack of both of them. I have a new plan for the future and am renewing my hobby vows and invite you to join me and do the same. The picture-perfect plants that result will be our reward.

In my opinion, there are two factors that are more important to the success of indoor plants than any other growing conditions, and they are: the grower's time and interest. I've read many articles about the proper care of African violets and noticed that few mention them. I believe that if growers invest too much time doting on their plants, over-watering or excess fertilizing can result. Being impatient with waiting for new growth or blooms to occur can lead to a grower making poor decisions about culture conditions. A heavy interest may lead growers to acquiring more plants than they can reasonably manage, which will lead to improper care and poor plant health. On the other hand, too little time spent caring for indoor plants can lead to infrequent and insufficient watering, inadequate grooming and repotting frequency. Pest problems may go unnoticed and get out of control.

Lack of interest causes growers to spend minimal time and effort caring for plants, and the plants will suffer. When growers have the optimal level of interest in the hobby of growing African violets, they will make the required effort to learn about the needs of these plants (light, water, soil, fertilizer, humidity, etc.). They spend the required amount of time working with their collection to ensure the optimal health of all plants.

What can we, as hobby growers, do to ensure that we maintain our two human factors of time

and interest at the optimal level? I have some ideas. Since time is a fixed dimension, I cannot offer many suggestions in this area, except to perhaps take time management training and apply what we learn. I am a mother of two with a full time job and am involved in many activities and am always short of time! However, I find that when I have enough interest in something, I am able to find time during my hectic life. I have focused my efforts on increasing and maintaining my interest by renewing my African violet vows.

Ask yourself these 3 questions: (Write down your answers - this is very important, go get a pen and paper right now!)

1. What do you enjoy about growing African violets? Are there some aspects of growing that you like more than others? What makes you happy about your hobby?

2. What plants do you like to grow best? Think of the plants that are your favorites. What are their common characteristics? For example, what leaf type, flower type, flower color, or gesneriad do you like to grow the best or admire most?

3. What goals do you have for your African violet hobby? Think forward to a period of approximately 6 months to 1 year. What do you hope to achieve? Is there a different gesneriad you'd like to try growing? Are you searching for a particular variety? Do you want to try a new watering method? Do you plan to modify your lighting? Are you considering growing for show? Are you interested in giving presentations about your hobby to your club or to other organizations?

Have you answered the above questions? If we clearly understand what we enjoy best about our hobby, we can focus our limited time and our efforts in the most effective way. We will be able to

use a list of our favorite plants and plant characteristics to help us make decisions about our collection. For example which plants to discard and what new plants to bring home to add to our collection. We will have a list of goals so we can track our progress.

In case you are curious, here are my answers. If they inspire you to add to your answers please write down your additional responses.

1. The things I enjoy best about growing are:  
starting new plants  
sharing plants with others  
talking about plants with others

2. My favorite plants are those with:  
interesting foliage, can be variegated, ruffled  
double blossoms  
edged blossoms  
dark red/wine colored blossoms

3. My goals for my hobby are: Write an article for *Chatter*: (and if you are reading this now, I've achieved at least 1 of my goals and YOU will achieve yours too!)

To only grow plants I enjoy now, not in the past, and not save for some distant future.

To use decorative or at least uniform, nice looking pots.

To control fungus gnats.

To keep the number of the plants I am growing at a maximum of what can fit onto the 6 six shelves I have.

To regularly visit my AVs and take the time to assess each plant individually.

The next step to renew our African violet vows is to neatly print our answers in an attractive format,

using pictures when possible, and post in a prominent location, for example, near our plants. Try to use more succinct language and use action-oriented phrases.

After posting our answers, let's vow to read them periodically to remind ourselves of the reasons why this wonderful hobby is important to us. We will be inspired to achieve the goals we have set. Let's share our goals with others, like friends, family, and club members, as it is more likely we will succeed if our peers are involved.

One year from now, we will revisit our hobby vows. We will ask ourselves these follow-up questions:

**1) How has my life changed since last year?**

**2) What is my interest in my African violet hobby?**

**3) How many of my African violet hobby goals did I achieve?**

We will celebrate all of our many achievements by sharing our news with others. I suggest that we will reward ourselves, and our hobby, with a treat like new plants or supplies. We will review any goals we did not complete and ask ourselves what prevented us from doing so.

We will question what we can do differently to increase the likelihood that we will meet the goals in the following year, or modify the goals to suit our life at that time. Remember that our hobby needs to be enjoyable, not daunting.

Let's renew our African violet vows annually, and we will have a mutually beneficial relationship for years to come!

From *Chatter*, publication of the AVS of Canada



# DOES TEMPERATURE MATTER?

by Sue Gardner

Does temperature affect your life? Do you wilt in hot weather, and shiver in cold temperatures? Different temperatures affect plants too!

Let us view plants as small factories where many chemical reactions take place simultaneously. The most obvious of these are photosynthesis (to make food) and respiration which uses food to operate and grow. Both health and flowering depend on these reactions.

How do temperature changes affect these reactions? Plant cell activity has been shown to be small below 50°F (10°C), rises with rise in temperature, and experiences a sudden decline above 104°F (40°C). Most plants grow best somewhere between these points. For African violets, the optimum temperature range has been shown to be between 59°F – 77°F (15°C– 25°C). Below 41°F (5°C) and above 104°F (40°C), the leaves can go glassy and collapse.

Not many places provide the optimum temperature constantly. In Melbourne, the average winter (July) temperature varies between night temperatures, 42°F (5.7°C) to daytime temperatures, 57°F (13.8°C). Sometimes it's even colder. In January, the average is 58°F (14.5°C) to 78°F (25.8°C), but day temperatures can go over 104°F (40°C) several times per summer.

Let's see how extremes of temperature can affect our plants.

**How do different temperatures affect flowering?** Experiments show that temperature affects flowering in some plant types. Some, such as celery, flower only after exposure to low temperatures. This simulates the winter between two flowering periods.

Some plants flower more quickly when exposed to high temperatures. This is why your lettuce goes to seed in hot weather.

African violets belong between these two extremes. They prefer mild day temperatures to flower well. Night temperatures can also have an effect. Usually the number of flower buds produced (under good light conditions) increases if night

temperature is high rather than low. This fact has been accepted by African violet growers who recommend night temperatures to be about 59°F (15°C).

**What about watering in hot or cold weather?** In hot weather, plants need more water. Have you ever wondered how much more?

Well, if the temperature is increased from 68°F (20°C) to 86°F (30°C) and humidity is 60% in both cases, transpiration (water loss) from a leaf almost doubles. If temperature goes to 104°F (40°C), it almost triples. In our summers, the humidity usually is low on hotter days, so the water loss would be even greater. You need to make sure your plants do not dry out in summer! If you have evaporative cooling, the humidity is kept higher so this effect is less.

In winter, things are different. At low temperatures, transpiration slows, especially at night. Because less water is lost, pressure builds up in the xylem, and drops of water exude from pores at the ends of veins. We often see this on winter mornings - little drops of liquid on the tips and margins of leaves. This is called *aguttation*.

African violet growers often dislike this because when the liquid dries, a white residue is often left which spoils the fresh look of the plant. Several people have remedies for this. Some use a weak vinegar solution; another suggestion I read recently (in AVM) was to rub the spot with a cut petiole to dissolve the white residue.

In cold weather, potting mix can easily be waterlogged, as the plant cannot use as much water as usual. Plants will then be more susceptible to root rot. If your home is cold in winter, *do not over-water!* You may prefer to remove plants from wick-watering containers during the coldest periods and water by hand. If you have central heating, or your plant growing area is not too cold, continue as usual. But remember that central heating usually reduces humidity. If your plant growing area has low humidity, bud blast (dry dead buds) will occur. Wick watering usually prevents this.

**How do high and low temperatures affect variegation?** Temperature affects the rate of photosynthesis, so warmer conditions will help a variegated plant to grow faster. Cooler temperatures will decrease growth. The amount of variegation is also affected. Plants are greener at high temperatures, and more variegated at lower temperatures. Variegated plants do not like to become too cold. Leaves can develop brown spots on the margins when affected by very low temperatures.

**How do different temperatures affect propagation?** Warmth can dramatically affect propagation. If heat is applied under the pot containing a leaf cutting, root growth can be very fast. I recently found a warm place to put my leaf cuttings, and they rooted in seven days compared to several times longer in winter temperatures. Of

course, the warmth should be suitable about 72°F – 77°F (22-25°C). Moisture and humidity must be provided also. Cuttings should be hardened at usual growing temperature afterwards.

**How should we fertilize in hot and cold weather?** In cold temperatures, because our plants grow more slowly, they need less fertilizer. At high temperatures, because plants lose more water, we should dilute our fertilizer solution. At both extremes, we could cause fertilizer burn or a build-up of fertilizer salts on the plant if we over-fertilize.

What do we learn from all of this? African violets grow best between 59°F and 77°F (15°C and 25°C). But if we take precautions, we can continue to grow our plants all year round quite successfully.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia

## Affiliate Information Needed

The new AVSA website is up and running. It is easy to submit updated information to appear in the Local Clubs section of the website. This is a great way to advertise your club's activities to prospective new members. Current information is needed from the following local clubs (Affiliates):

**Alabama** — Early Bird Violet Club

**Arkansas** — Green Thumb AV Club

**California** — Town and Country AVS

**Colorado** — Loveland Sweetheart Violettes, Ultra Violet Club

**Florida** — North Lake AVS

**Illinois** — AVS of Northern Illinois, Barrington Bloomers AVS, Lake Shore AVS, Quad Cities AVS

**Kansas** — Lawrence AV Club

**Kentucky** — AVS of Kentuckiana

**Louisiana** — Jefferson AV Association, Sun downer's AVS, The VerBeau AV Club

**Missouri** — Heart of Missouri AVS, Inner City AVS, Missouri Valley AV Council, St. Louis AV Judges Council

**New Mexico** — Albuquerque AV Club

**Pennsylvania** — AVS of Central Pennsylvania

**New York** — Heritage AVS of Long Island, Metropolitan Regional Council of African Violet Judges, Vestal AV and Gesneriad Society

**Texas** — AVS of Beaumont, Central Texas Judges Council, Office Violets and Lunch

**South Carolina** — First AVS of Spartanburg

**Virginia** — Danville AVS

**West Virginia** — Mountain State AVS

**Wisconsin** — Crosstown AV Club, River Cities AV Club

**Australia** — AV Association of Australia, AVS of Queensland, AVS of South Australia, Early Morn AV Group, AVS of Western Australia

**Bahamas** — Bahamas AVS

**Canada** — Annapolis Valley AVS, First Halifax AVS, London AVS

**Hong Kong** — AVS of Hong Kong

Please go to [www.avsa.org](http://www.avsa.org) and submit your updates or send your updates to Mel Grice, AVSA Affiliate chair at [melsgrice@earthlink.net](mailto:melsgrice@earthlink.net).

Mel Grice, 2019 Crosswind Court, Englewood, OH 45322 USA

Please remember to send notification of new club Presidents to AVSA, 2375 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702 [avsa@earthlink.net](mailto:avsa@earthlink.net).



# What are Our Local Clubs Doing to Increase Membership?

During the 2013 AVSA Austin Convention, members were asked what their local clubs did to increase membership.

Below are some of the ideas they shared that have proven successful.

- We have changed our meeting format and members have responded well to it. We have basic welcome, introductions of guests, present a door prize and a few other things, such as our Auction. Then we jump right into the Culture Class, followed by the Program. Then there is a break for coffee, tea, and desserts and Opportunity Table drawings of violet-related items, followed by the actual meeting. People who have to leave early prefer to come for the program and miss the meeting rather than vice versa.

- After we tried this method, the club voted unanimously to continue it! If we hold the Opportunity Table drawings at the end of the meeting, people who have to leave early (1) miss out on bringing home the goodies and (2) they don't buy the tickets, which is a terrific fundraiser!

- At our shows, we have membership applications, which include a list of our monthly meetings and the program as well as the membership application. We meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month and have a meeting the Wednesday after our show. The past couple of years, the program at that meeting has been entitled "What do I Do With that Plant I Just Bought?" and is a general AV culture and care program. Visitors at the show are encouraged to come to the meeting, bring the plant they bought, or one they are already growing that they have questions about.

- We have raffles at every meeting, both as a fundraiser and to get more plant material and supplies to members, and we often have seedlings

or cuttings given to all members. We have a plant sale each month. We seem to get new members from people who go to our spring show or who are friends of members.

- New people enjoy hands on presentations where they can learn by doing.

- More advanced members enjoy Power Point presentations. Our membership seems to enjoy plant raffles, and we have one every meeting. We changed our meeting time to Saturday morning and have increased our membership!

- We always have a program on either growing violets, growing related gesneriads, or doing a design. We occasionally have a "Dog Show," and next month, one of our affiliate clubs will be playing Bingo using violet terms.

- Our club always has a program, like most clubs, but we always try for a program actually featuring plants and "hands on." New members especially go home with some new plants, leaves, etc. Workshops and demonstrations throughout our shows often attract the most new members.

- Potting or repotting parties are the most fun, and everyone shows up at those. Of course, we use newspapers on top of the tables to catch all the accidents.

- I also have been doing a "member's moment / member's choice" which I ask one member the week before the meeting if they would speak 5 to 10 minutes on something that they found really interesting about growing African violets. It can be from an old AVM, something they read from a book, or off the Internet. Topics can cover the way we grow today to ways that we used to grow. It encourages members to participate in the meetings and also adds more than one topic that we can talk

about. It's interesting the range of topics that we have covered in that 5 to 10 minutes each meeting.

- The Internet has helped attract new members. Our two newest members found our club listed on the AVSA website, then visited our website and decided to attend a meeting. Also, the fact that our club meets on a Saturday was a factor as both of these people work during the week.

- Plant sales have been our best method to attract new members. Because of our shrinking membership, we have not been able to have a judged show since 2008, but we have continued to

have our yearly Mother's Day Sale. Not only do we sell plants, but we give out advice on how to grow plants and repotting tips. This year, we are giving away very old AVSA magazines to people when they visit our sale.

- We discuss what is happening in the community, trips, plant sales, etc. We have a raffle that is fun, and also our members like 'hands on' potting, putting down leaves, making small terrariums. New members have come because older members invite them, and they like the club and stay.

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### Journey of the African Violet



From African Violets Gifts of Nature, The Series: Book One

By Melvin J. Robey

Illustrations by: Tish McFee

# Creating a Consistent Environment

By: Doug Burdick  
dburdick@msn.com

I knew that if I wanted to succeed in growing plants, I would have to create a controllable, consistent environment. My first step was to turn a quarter of my basement into a greenhouse. This was not too difficult since it was unfinished. I used plastic sheets and basically created an enclosed plastic bubble where I could control the environment.

The next step was to purchase a thermostat that has day and night settings. When the lights go on, the thermostat goes onto daytime temperatures that I have set at 24°C (75°F), and when the lights go off, it goes to the night temperature that I have set at 18°C (65°F). This is how I regulate the temperature during the winter.

During the summer, it's another story. Currently, I don't have a way to cool my plant room during the summer. The only way I can keep it cool is to open the room up to the rest of the basement.

It's important to control the night temperature, and the ideal is 20°C (68°F) to a minimum of 18°C (65°F). Below that, growth slows down and below 16°C (60°F) growth basically stops. The ideal day temperature is 24°C (75°F) degrees. The daytime max can go up to 29°C (84°F). Above that, blossoms get stunted and growth gets gnarly.

I am one of those people that when I find something that works, I stick with it. One of the tricks I learned was on how to avoid overwatering

plants when they are young. When I repot, a lot of times I am taking down a neck so I will take that plant down to three sets of leaves, and I try to match the amount of leaves on the top to the root system at the bottom. I pot them into 4" pots so it is easy to overwater them. I water them and put them into covered flats and let them do their thing. I will not put them on wicks until I know that their root systems have developed. One clue is when I water them on the Saturday and see that they are dry by Thursday, I know that their root system has developed. Then I put them on the wick.

For a greenhouse, they often recommend 800-1200 foot-candles of light. I have the light on for twelve hours with one cool light and one wide-spectrum grow light. What that translates into is placing your standard violets at 10"-12" from tubes and minis at 8"-10." I am now switching over to T8's which is a bit of a learning curve.

I have a light meter, and I don't use it as much as I used to, but what I find it handy for is to check to see if the tubes are getting towards the end of their life. I measure about an inch from the tube, and you get a fairly consistent reading, and then I can see whether light quantity has dropped, and I will know it's time to change. If you don't change frequently enough, the light quantity goes down.

From *Chatter*, Publication of the AVS of Canada



## Trimming...

By Joyce Stork  
from the AVSA FAQ Section

Trim off the individual flowers as they fade, and when the entire cluster is gone, remove the flower stem by rocking it from side to side until it comes loose from the main stem. This trimming has the effect of increasing future blooming, so it is important to keep up with it.

# How to Repot to Bury a Neck or to Rescue a Violet from Root Rot

By Joyce Stork

The process of repotting is intimidating, and often growers try to do it the "safe way" which is actually why they die. You have to be fairly aggressive in transplanting but then provide the safety net that gets them growing again.

•Step 1 - Remove all older leaves that are smaller than the leaves above or are faded in color or nicked and damaged. I rarely leave more than about 10 leaves total. Remove all flowers.

•Step 2 - Use the dull side of a knife to scrape about two inches of the stem (gently!) that is just below the bottom row of leaves. You should be scraping to smooth off the stumps of leaves just removed and to remove just the surface of any old dried tissue.

•Step 3 - Next amputate the top half of the plant by making a straight cut about one and a half to two inches below the bottom row of leaves. Discard the bottom section of the plant, although the pot may be saved and washed for reuse.

•Step 4 - While you can see the inside of the stem, look to see if there is any sign of rot. A brown pithy center or dried powdery center is a definite sign. You may also see darkened mushy plant tissue or leaves that seem to rot off at the main stem. If any symptom is present, clean your knife and cut higher on the stem until you are above the rot. As long as the center leaves are intact, the plant has a chance.

•Step 5 - Prepare a fresh pot, the same size as before, with a light porous potting mix. Commercial potting mixes are too heavy (even the ones labeled for violets). We recommend a homemade mix made of one part sphagnum peat moss (brown is much better than black), one part vermiculite, and one part perlite. Or, if you can find a commercial mix that has a brown color, try mixing it half and half with either vermiculite or perlite. Water the pot to moisten the soil thoroughly and drain off the excess water that runs through.

•Step 6 - Set the stem of the violet onto the top of the pot so that the stem is in good contact with the potting medium. If that part of the stem is bent, set the stem straight down into the soil. The leaves will soon straighten out and go level. A bent stem under the soil seems to cause the plant to grow oddly for an extended time.

•Step 7 - Place the plant into a clear plastic bag or container and seal it tightly closed. Set it in a bright location but out of direct sunlight. In about a month, new roots will have formed and the plant will be showing new growth. You will not need to water during this time period.

•Step 8 - Open the bag or container gradually over a period of two days to equalize the humidity slowly and prevent shock. Then enjoy your rejuvenated plant!

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## What's the Difference...Between an Individual Membership and an Associate Membership?

By Joyce Stork  
From AVSA's FAQ Section

**Individual Membership** is for those who wish to receive the *African Violet Magazine*. **Associate Membership** is for those who are married to an AVSA member (who receives the

magazine) and who wish to exhibit in AVSA shows or participate in AVSA activities as a member... associates **do not** receive a copy of the magazine.

# AVSA Commercials

A Closer Look – and a Look Back from 1987

By David Buttram

## Holtkamp Greenhouses

1987 Interview with Reinhold Holtkamp

The approach to America's largest producer of African violets is a little deceptive. Holtkamp Greenhouses are located on an immaculate 32-acre tract in a neighborhood on Nashville's north central side.

The site was selected by Reinhold Holtkamp in 1977 after coming to the United States from his native Germany to open a greenhouse operation. The Nashville greenhouse complex began as a dream in 1959 when Holtkamp visited the U.S. and became enamored with "this large country and its unlimited possibilities."

Let's go back to the beginning of the story. Reinhold's grandfather started the greenhouse company in 1900 in Germany. The original greenhouses were in Emmerich, Germany, which is near the Dutch border. It is near the crossing of the Auto Bahn and is a commercial center. Reinhold was born and raised in nearby Isselburg where the greenhouses were moved. The latest move of the German greenhouses was for economic reasons, and Haffen is the new home.



Reinhold Holtkamp, Sr.

"I was born in 1935. In 1936 my father, Hermann, started research and breeding of African violets. We were very successful after World War II. You know, during the war, we had to grow vegetables in our greenhouses. The government dictated what we had to do. When everything got better, the economy

and so, we went back into the flower business, in 1949. All kinds, mainly bedding plants, cyclamen, shrubs, and hydrangeas. As time went on we became more specialized. Up to 10 or 15 years ago we still had anthuriums, flamingo flowers, hydrangeas, kalanchoes, and the violets. One by one we dropped one kind after another until seven or eight years ago we stopped totally all other plants and went strictly to the African violets."

Reinhold is proud of his family's contribution to the African violet world. He explains about the Optimaras, "People believe Rhapsodies and Optimaras are two strains. They are only two trade names. The introduction of our varieties was in St. Louis in 1968. In 1978 we introduced Optimaras in St. Louis again. When we got here and established ourselves, we chose this name Optimara. What does Optimara mean? Optima in Latin means the best and "ra" was the only possibility of getting a trade name.

"My father is retired. He is 83 years old and doesn't do any hybridizing. I took over the hybridizing part from here, but now most of the hybridizing is done in Germany by Martin Holtkamp who is the son of my brother. We still do research-cross breeding here, but not in a big style because we don't have facilities and most importantly, the people."

The hybridizing area in Nashville is confined to about 8,000 square feet, while in Germany they have more space and grow about 150,000 seedlings a year. Reinhold enjoys hybridizing and remarks, "When you get started in breeding it gets in your blood and you can't stop it. That's why we do some seedlings, but not now so many because this place is getting bigger and bigger and needs my whole attention."

In their hybridizing program, the Holtkamps have as their goals, long-lasting blooms, good colors, and the typical characteristic of a bouquet of flowers. Resistance against certain diseases is also

sought. Reinhold adds, "Now, for a couple of years, we have had 'semperflorens' which means 'always in bloom,' because when the first flush of flowers are going, another flush is to come out.

"We have very poor light conditions in Germany. For over fifteen years now the plants that do not do well in November, December, January, and February we do not propagate. We have a strain of plants that performs well under poor light conditions. Optimara is known for that. They are easy to reflower."

Of their 150 standard varieties on the market, about 75% are Optimum and 25% are Rhapsodies.

Recently, a new line of miniatures was introduced. Known as "Little Jewels," five are on the market with seven more to be released within a year. The "Little Jewels" are shipped in specially designed Styrofoam boxes and shipped primarily by Federal Express which ensures delivery within hours of the order being placed.

Did the Holtkamps have specific goals to become the world's largest producer of African violets?

"No, actually not. We did not say we wanted to be the biggest. The reason we think it turned out this way is number one, what we think of as quality. If we try to be the biggest producers of violets, the quality is going to suffer. We have heard people say, "We want large numbers of violets, but in Holtkamp quality."

Reinhold is joined in Nashville by wife, Gisela, who works with hybridizing and miniature production. Son, Reinhold, Jr., is a recent graduate of Vanderbilt University with a Masters of Business Administration. He works in the office and represents the company at trade shows. About four years ago daughter Margit came to the



Reinhold, Sr. and his wife, Gisela

U.S. where she works in the office and sales.

In addition to the Holtkamp family, there are two dependable managers and about 90 other workers. With the help of his dedicated employees and an enlarged greenhouse range of approximately seven acres, Reinhold's goal is to produce 13 million African violets this year. This, combined with other Holtkamp greenhouses in Germany (200,000 square feet), Spain (110,000 square feet), and Tokyo (50,000), should boost production to a staggering 60 million plants worldwide.



Two-acre greenhouse under construction

Holtkamp Greenhouses only sell wholesale and their plants are sold largely as starter plants, which are rooted, well-established plants from leaf cuttings. The plants are sold in plastic flats consisting of 1 1/2" square cells. About 50% of the plants are sold this size. Approximately 40% of sales are of the pre-finished plants in 4" pots. These are in bud and about two weeks away from full bloom. Finished plants fulfill the remaining 10% of sales. These are sold in 4" pots with blooms fully open and ready for retail sales.

In such a large operation, it is interesting to note that plants are started like home growers do - one leaf at a time. Leaves are removed from stock plants and "stuck" into a growing medium. Like most greenhouse growers, the leaves are inserted deeply into the medium, leaving only about 3/4 of the leaf showing. Baby plants are removed and separated by hand and placed into the 1 1/2" cells mentioned above, until they are sold or repotted.

Holtkamps patent their varieties. The reason: "As you know, it is very expensive to produce new varieties. If we did not patent them, there are



many people who would sell them and we could not recover our money. A plant patent lasts for seventeen years." Although the law protects the Optimaras and Rhapsodies from being vegetatively propagated, many American hybridizers have used the increased gene pool to good advantage.

Using colchicine and other chemicals, Holtkamp has tried to force mutations for new varieties. Without much success in this area he admits, "We have done all that is possible on Earth. In April 1984, 25,000 of his African violet seeds were launched into outer space in a joint effort with Park Seed Co. and NASA. The seeds were to have been recovered by the ill-fated crew of the space shuttle Columbia in January 1986. Reinhold fears that by the time the next space shuttle is sent into space, the seeds will have received too much radiation to germinate.

The Optimara line of supplies came about as people were asking, "Mr. Holtkamp, how can we treat our plants? How shall we water them? What kind of fertilizer? What kind of soil? That's how we got the idea. Let's take our products and package them for the consumer. Everything we sell is exactly what we use in our greenhouses.

"Our soil mix is the highest quality you can buy. Our fertilizer is 14-12-14 and we use a lower potassium (middle number) because our plants are bred to bloom profusely. To use a high percent of potassium, like 36-50 like some do is to distort the true color."

The American Dream has existed for over 200 years for people of all races, religions, and nationalities. America has offered its rewards to those willing to pay the price of daring to live a dream. The dream of Reinhold Holtkamp began to take shape with the purchase of the old property which consisted of a ramshackle, 100,000 square foot greenhouse, full of thousands of dead rose plants. Determination, hard work, and, yes, even luck, have played their roles for the past ten years.

Holtkamp's faith in the future of African violets is readily seen in his most recent addition. A two-acre greenhouse with state-of-the-art equipment was recently opened. Now in full operation, a handful of employees can pot, sort, and relocate giant aluminum trays filled with plants, with ease and speed. The mechanical and electronic equipment is a wonder to behold as production time is greatly reduced and quality is increased.

Ours is a nation of immigrants. Our forebearers came here for many reasons: freedom, opportunity, the pursuit of that urge that resides deep within the human chest to reach out - to stretch out - beyond ourselves. Reinhold Holtkamp and family exemplify those most basic human desires.

From: *The African Violet Magazine*,  
vol. 40, Number 6  
November / December 1987

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## Warming Mats

By Joyce Stork  
From AVSA's FAQ Section

Warming mats, such as those used for starting seeds, are a great idea when the house is cool. The air temperature is not as important to the plant's

growth as the root temperature, and a warming mat provides just enough extra to keep the plant growing and thriving.

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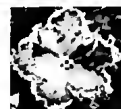
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